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WAYFARERS IN ITALY

by KATHARINE HOOKER

FIFTH EDITION

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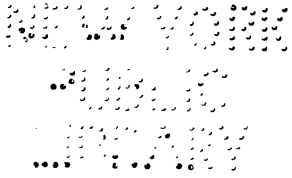
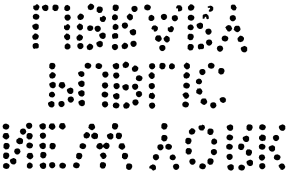
To J. D. H.

FOR WHOM ALL WAS WRITTEN





CONTENTS

PAGE

On the Lombard Plain - - - - - - - - 3
Milan, Bergamo, Brescia, Mantua, Ferrara.

Sojourning in Florence - - - - - - - - 36
Florence.

Driving through Tuscany - - - - - - - 64
Monte Oliveto, San Quirico, Pienza, Montepulciano, Cortona, Arezzo, Borgo San Sepolcro.

April in the Marches - - - - - - - - - 88
Jesi, Loreto, Recanati, Macerata, Ascoli, San Benedetto del Tronto.

In the Abruzzi - - - - - - - - - - 116
Solmona, Scanno, Avezzano.

Roman Excursions - - - - - - - - - 141
Anagni, Bracciano, Viterbo.

Monte Cassino and Ravello - - - - - - - 162

The Heart of Umbria - - - - - - - - - 184
Narni, Assisi, Perugia, Trasimeno.

Across the Apennines - - - - - - - - 211
Gubbio, Urbino.

The Shore of the Adriatic - - - - - - - - 226
Rimini, San Leo, Ravenna.

Siena and the Palio - - - - - - - - 242
Siena.

Tower'd Cities - - - - - - - - - - 257
San Gimignano, Volterra, Lucca.

Venice - - - - - - - - - - - - 279

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Bergamo. Castle of Malpaga	16
Brescia. Tile Lattice	20
Brescia. On the Way to Paitone	24
Ferrara. At the Cathedral Door	32
Florence. Fountain of Bacchus	40
Florence. Via di Belvedere	44
Florence. Vicolo d'Oro	48
Fiesole. A Hillside Villa	56
Monte Oliveto. Chiusuri	68
Pienza. The Gateway	72
Borgo. A Street	80
Jesi. The City Wall	90
Ascoli. The Aqueduct	104
Ascoli. The Castle	108

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Ascoli. A Farmhouse	112
Solmona. The Market-place	120
Avezzano. The Castle	128
Anagni. The Papal Palace	144
Anagni. A Street	146
Bracciano. The Castle	152
Monte Cassino. The Court	160
Ravello. Pergola in the Deserted Garden	168
Ravello. A By-way	172
Ravello. The Fountain in Piazza del Toro	176
Ravello. The Church on the Cliff	182
Assisi. Dwellings	192
Perugia. Perugian Oxen	200
Umbria. A Wayside Shrine	208
Gubbio. The Town Walls	216

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Gubbio to Urbino.	
Approaching the Furlo Pass	224
San Leo.	
The Engraving from Dennistoun	228
Rimini.	
The Castle	232
Ravenna.	
Garden of Palazzo Rasponi	236
Ravenna.	
The Pineta	240
Siena.	
The Mangia Tower	244
Siena.	
Palazzo Grotanelli	248
Siena.	
Fonte Branda	256
San Gimignano.	
The Fountain without the Walls	260
Volterra.	
The City Gate	264
Lucca.	
The Guinigi Tower	272
Venice.	
Giovanni	280
Venice.	
Palazzo Dario	288
Venice.	
The Madonna of San Giorgio	296
Torcello.	
Bridge and Campanile	304

"Dost know the tombs of Castel d'Asso? The towers of San Gimignano? The outlooks from Montepulciano? The palaces of Pienza? The cloisters of Oliveto Maggiore? Hast ever penetrated the obscure renown of the Fanum Voltumnæ,— or followed the fading frescoes of the Grotta del Trinclinio,— or studied the lengthening shadows of the Val di Chiana,— or boated it across to the lonely isles of the Lago Trasimeno?"

HENRY B. FULLER. *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani.*

ON THE LOMBARD PLAIN

"O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

"I climb'd the roof at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they."

TENNYSON. *The Daisy.*

Y THE first of March spring was in full possession of the Riviera. At Hyères and Mentone the days were warm and mild and daffodils were showing their delicate faces.

Climbing the mountain paths, lounging upon the grass under venerable olive trees we forgot that there could be frost and cold not far away; and when we crossed the boundary of Italy and made our way toward Milan it was a shock to meet winter again, among deep snow and leafless trees. We gazed from the car windows a little forlornly; it seemed but a chilly greeting from the land of our love. But the feeling lasted only a moment; the sun came out presently and lighted the landscape till it shone and

sparkled, and before darkness shut down we were again in warmer regions.

It is a question by which gate one should enter Italy. Whether to sail into the Bay of Naples, and yield oneself up at once to the fulness of her charms amid the richness and foreignness of the South, or to begin in the North, and let her unfold them by slow degrees as one advances. To succumb in the beginning need not be to risk disillusion later, for she is dear and beautiful in any phase, but some may enjoy the completeness of a surrender at the first, while others prefer the coquetry of being wooed and won more gradually, thus husbanding their sensations, so to speak. Age and temperament will have to do with the choice, but, fortunately, either way there need, in the end, be no regret.

To begin with Milan is to start soberly. If one be carping one is inclined to find it too modern, too prosperous, and to be disappointed that most of the ancient buildings have been swept away, and that the elaborate stone carving in the ceiling of the cathedral is only brown paper. But this is unreasonable. We can not expect Italy not to experiment in commercial progress with the rest of the world, and the brown paper merely indicates magnificent intentions for future fulfilment. Are there not two thousand marble statues on the exterior of the edifice now, with Napoleon among them, by the way, in classic drapery, to show what has already been accomplished?

We took advantage of the early morning, which was crystal clear, to climb the four hundred and ninety-four steps that lead to the roof, and there to look down upon all the kingdoms of the earth spread out before us, or so it seemed. Towering against the heavens rose the noblest peaks of the Alps, Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, with all their lesser brethren. Eternal,

immovable, in their spotless purity of whiteness, they leaned back against the illimitable blue, looking down indifferently upon the turmoil of the world below. Farther away the Apennines loomed dimly, and great plains unrolled themselves to the horizon, while the cities of the world were represented nearest us by the domes and pinnacles of Pavia.

A time never comes when the eye and mind are weary of these things, and yet they must be abandoned and the traveler return to earth. On the way down one may purchase if one pleases a little silver medal, at a modest price, from an old man who lives upon the roof, and yet who shows none of that indifference and detachment that such intimate association with cold statues and frozen peaks might engender. On the contrary he chats sociably and lauds the artless design on the medal, where the complete façade of the *duomo* is attempted in the space of a third of an inch.

Below, as one emerges upon the great busy piazza, one is conscious of being in one of the largest centres of the Italian life of to-day, and the grandiose Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, with its big colonnades and glittering arcades, is amusing enough for a time. Threading the arcade, it is possible to cut off part of the distance to the quarter where the principal hotels lie by passing through a by-street where there is a very attractive little fruit shop. We noted it, and stopped to make purchases. Various tempting fruits of the early spring were offered for sale, with every advantage of arrangement and contrast. We admired and hesitated in our selection, and a sweet-faced young woman who was minding the shop came forward to assist us. With the first words that she uttered, all interest in her wares departed; her manner was full of blithe courtesy, but her voice it was that chained the attention. It was one of the sweetest I ever

heard; its every cadence pure music. To make her talk was the instant impulse, and fortunately it is seldom hard to accomplish that with an Italian girl. She cordially met every subject in the limited range we could call up, and the more she talked the more captivated we became. She smiled, she chatted, and showed no self-consciousness, while the melodious voice rippled out with a variety of intonation and range that repeatedly surprised us. It is needless to say that while we stayed in Milan we found fruit a daily necessity and in the end might almost have called ourselves personal friends of this enticing daughter of the people.

Whatever may be the faults of the lower class of Italians, as one sees it in Italy, it is as distinctly aristocratic as the corresponding orders in certain other nations are vulgar. There is an unembarrassed manner, a self-respect, a cheerful courtesy, and a pleasant sort of confidingness that seldom fail, and it all helps to give intercourse with them an ease and charm that renders traveling twice as agreeable and sows it with encounters and incidents, trifling enough in themselves, but which color and warm the retrospect.

But besides loitering in fruit-shops there is much to do in Milan. The splendid picture-gallery, with its fine arrangement and admirable care in attributions, offers opportunity for endless pleasure and study; and indeed the city is rich in pictures and frescoes, scattered through various collections and churches. The little Museo Poldi-Pezzoli, for example, is a treasure-house of desirable things.

The Cavaliere Poldi-Pezzoli, who died some twenty years ago, bequeathed his *palazzo*, filled with the costly collections he had made, to the city, and it is now kept open to the public certain hours in the day. It stands in a narrow street which hardly yields width enough to

throw back the head for a scrutiny of its unpretentious façade, and when one has entered, it gives a pleasing sense of nearness and personality, due to its compact proportions and tasteful arrangement. One is conscious of subdued color in some old tapestries on the ground floor, and passes by a mildly gurgling little fountain to mount the stairs to the principal apartments. Here are wondrous things. Armor, antique glass and porcelain, bronze and enamel are to be seen, and not in the fatiguing and endless variety of a national museum but in a few rare and exquisite examples. There are reliquaries luminous with color and jewels of intricate design, set with precious stones at whose names one must guess and which start the vagrant fancy upon excursions into the romance of the past. Everything is rich and quiet; nothing garish or insistent. But the *palazzo* itself is not antique, and it is interesting to examine the details of its construction and furnishing in the taste of the Cavaliere's day, and to see the jewel-box which he has contrived to make of it.

The *sala nera* is lined with ebony, the panels outlined with delicate patterns in ivory, and inlaid ivory also forms the decoration of the ebony chairs, with their cushions of pale green embroidered satin. The walls of a bedchamber are a mass of high relief carving in a deep brown, dull-finished wood, the frames of doors and windows coming into especially ornamented prominence. The floor of this room is a wood mosaic, but the most imposing object is the bed. Raised upon a dais, and with a carved canopy of wonderful design and workmanship, it is supported by four demons of terrible aspect, and one is left in doubt as to whether, if the dark hours were ever wakeful, the thought of their presence would bring more of a sense of shrinking or protection.

But choicest of all is a tiny *salon* adjoining the bedroom, and which appears to be a breakfast-room. Here

ingenuity has done its utmost. The ceiling is a diaper pattern of dull gold with suggestions of warm color. More gorgeous are the walls below, and over the mantel is a gold grill set with enamel and precious stones, and guarded by golden dragons with jeweled eyes. A cabinet in the wall, with door of solid crystal, has its lock and strap-hinges of gold bronze set with coral, and its inner drawers covered with patterns in etched mother-of-pearl, while two cupboards, on either side of the fireplace, hold a few examples of precious porcelain. In all these rooms the imagination must supply the presence of antique rugs, tapestries, and gold brocades, which are unstinted.

There is a certain artfulness in the way in which windows are disposed. One is not tempted toward those commanding the stony street; for there are those that look out upon a sweet garden that holds the shade of tall trees, and, though small like all the rest, is so effectually protected as to make its green pathways quite secluded.

But best of all in this little *palazzo* are the pictures,—treasures such as only wealth and discrimination can bring together,—and they call one back again and again, even when curiosity or admiration may have been satisfied in regard to all the rest. From these walls look down such heavenly mild madonnas, such rapt saints, such searching portraits, and especially, resting by herself upon an easel, there is the profile head of a girl that one can hardly part from. It is the very irregularity of her piquant face, in which innocence and coquetry seem blended, that renders her beauty so beguiling; but one can only conjecture how every one melted before her charm, for, like so many presentments of the past, be they ever so alluring, she smiles at us from the reticence of that disappointing title—Unknown Woman.

In our researches among the paintings we missed a certain madonna. The little picture should be there, but no effort discovered it. The difficulty of the chase sharpened zest; we appealed to the military-looking old custodian,—was there not such a canvas?

"Signore, you have the catalogue, and you see that it does not appear there."

But we, privileged bearers of the Golden Urn, pointed out in that sacred volume the name.

"Signore," repeated the old man, his voice dropping to a deeper bass, "this cannot be official,"—and he gazed at us sternly, as one who is upon the point of exposing those caught in the possession of contraband and pernicious literature.

We mildly stood our ground, but he still disclaimed and shook his head. What was our surprise, then, a little later, to see him emerge from a door unopened to the public, and advancing toward us with a somewhat furtive air, expose to our eager gaze the little madonna we sought, murmuring at the same time that it had never been on exhibition—never. Having once given way, he indulgently let us look upon her as long as we chose, and softened to our pleasure in her loveliness. And on leaving, what could we do when with tempered austerity he made it easy for us to evade the harsh rules posted upon the walls forbidding indulgence in gratuities?

In the late afternoon we drove slowly through the older portions of the city. The brilliant day had faded to grayness; in the great rock-paved square before the barracks, the sharply clipped trees seemed to fold themselves more closely together, lest the blandishments of the morning had tempted them to believe too soon in the coming of spring. We were on our way to the old *castello*, or what remains of it, for at this day only the corner towers and certain portions of the walls date back

even to the second founding of the city. To be sure, it is being restored, but we meant to ignore the present and dwell for the moment only upon its former glories.

More than once has Milan risen from her ashes, so that no traces of the Roman period are left, but as late as the twelfth century, when she numbered within her walls some four hundred thousand souls, she met an almost unparalleled fate. She fought tirelessly against the claims of the German emperors, but the great Barbarossa was at last too potent for her, and when he at length overcame her he decreed that she should be burned to her foundations and the land sowed with salt. It was done, and out of the hideous waste and desolation thus created stood up Saint Ambrogio and the few other churches spared, as sole evidence that a prosperous, populous city had ever covered the spot. But after a time, with the aid of sister cities, it was rebuilt, and its tumultuous changing life rolled on as before; and the huge inflexible old castle, with its deep-toned surfaces of weathered brick, stands there to-day to conjure up before the inner vision the phantoms of the two great families of tyrants that thereafter for two hundred years were identified with it.

This very afternoon, against the sombre sky above it, were there not suggestions in the curling mist wreaths of *il gran biscione*, the great serpent of the Visconti? Strange, resistless, wicked, ferocious monstrosities many of them were, for that race of tyrants, beginning with indomitable minds, if sometimes imprisoned in puny bodies, lapsed rapidly to blood-lust and madness. Memorable things have passed within those walls, and certain figures and events leap up with distinctness in the memory. There upon the battlements spectral shapes seem to congregate. First among the Visconti group, in its beginnings encouraging culture, displaying splendor

in its court, showing military power and diplomatic ability, Matteo, the temperate ruler, and his brutal, uncontrollable sons. Then Galeazzo, whose beauty of person eclipsed that of all other men; vain of his magnificent height, his perfect bearing, he stands, his long blond locks confined in a net of gold thread and wreathed with rose garlands, and crowding about him the fair women and gallant youths he entertained at his court, blazing with color, glittering with gems, babbling of banqueting, hunting and hawking—a pleasure-drunk rout.

And next, in contrast, the hesitating form, the pallid countenance of Gian Galeazzo—he of the cowardly, shrinking flesh but the powerful mind, the inexorable will, the fathomless craft; who never led the armies with which he subjugated all the north of Italy, who cloaked the poisonings and poignardings with which he came to ascendency, but who knew how to become yearly more opulent and more dreaded. At the last, flying with terror from the plague, yet unconsciously bearing its seeds with him, he died in a remote fortress, pointing out to his attendants a comet which appeared at that time as the signal ordained of God to be the memorial of the passing away of his puissance from earth.

But, behind him, who is this slender girlish figure that comes riding upon a sleekly groomed palfrey? It is Gian Galeazzo's daughter, Valentina Visconti, one of the most pathetic figures in history. Dearly cherished, richly dowered, reluctantly yielded up to a princely marriage, she has parted from the strange father who adored her and made her mistress of untold learned lore to fare forth toward France; her sumptuous robes are stiff with embroidery of precious stones, her neck and arms weighted with costly jewels, and thus she goes to lavish all the passionate devotion of her fervid nature upon the young husband who never gave her his undivided love,

but for the loss of whom, still young, brought in to her murdered and mutilated, she died of a broken heart.

And now, the ground about him strewed with dismembered corpses, Gian Maria, surrounded by his hounds, their fangs dripping gore, but their brute natures not so savage as that of the master who fed them on human flesh and trained them to hunt down the victims whose torture he afterwards gloated over.

Then the skulking misshapen Filippo, his deformity muffled in a heavy cloak, meeting the eye of no one, emerging unwillingly from the spider-like lurking-place whence, almost unseen by the eyes of men, he plotted and pulled the strings which moved the affairs of his duchy; fitly the last reigning prince of his name, to such a thin poisonous fluid had the blood of his family declined.

He passes, but he is followed by a stalwart forceful figure—Sforza, the great *condottiere*, who turned from tilling the soil to commanding armies and ruling multitudes. Beside the cowering Gian Maria he stands a hero, with all the nerve and brawn that had dwindled in the Visconti to a thing with scarce the shape of manhood, and if he crushed again the ever-renewed aspirations of the Milanese toward freedom, he at least ruled them justly and plunged them into no bloody wars. Yet even he could leave them no worthy successor. The degeneration of his race accomplished itself in even a shorter time.

His son walks next, who for his infamous crimes met death by the dagger-thrust of conspiracy. Over his shoulder, with eyes flashing fire, one can see the faces of those three youths whose families he had dishonored, and who hesitated not to devote themselves to sure death that they might rid the world of him. Within the sacred precincts of the church, before the altar of the

saint whose aid they had just invoked, they struck him down and his blood gushed forth, defiling the consecrated pavement.

Many other more or less clearly defined shades huddle on the ramparts, but among the last are three that most tempt the dreamer's musings, a dark, subtle-browed man, a child-faced, imperious woman, a gentle, confiding youth,— Lodovico il Moro, who ruled Milan with dignity and made it the home of artists and the resort of scholars; Beatrice, his youthful idolized wife; and the nephew whose rights he usurped, yet could attach to himself with a tenacious affection. Was it pure lust of power or worship of a fascinating capricious wife that caused Lodovico to hesitate at no duplicity, to avoid no blood-shedding, to stop at no dishonor, in the end to calmly poison the boy who trusted him, that the ducal power might not be wrested from his hands? And after? Having set the coronet upon the curly head of his Beatrice, to lose her in a moment and at last to languish out his days in a French dungeon.

A grisly phantasmagoria the life of that day presents itself to our sober onlooking! Theirs indeed was no colorless existence; they lived deeply and died violently, for the most part; intemperate in their love and hate, sinuous in their cunning, ungovernable in their rapacity, and few are the pages of Italian history that picture it more vividly than those of Milan.

BERGAMO.

On a certain sultry summer day, we two, among the latest reluctant travelers to retreat from Italian heat to the snows of Switzerland, were carried swiftly past this picturesque little place, gazing up wistfully at it with the impulse to make it a pretext for one more delay before

leaving the soil of Italy. But time, that claims its inevitable toll of us, sometimes grants us compensations, and so, three years later, the loss is made good; we have sojourned in Bergamo, and it has become one of our possessions! Prudent friends shook their heads at the idea of a pilgrimage to unfrequented towns under the very eaves of the Alps in March. We should be subjected to deadly chill in comfortless little inns; there was no knowing what might happen to us. But fate is kind; an almost premature warmth and mildness makes everything easy. It does not even rain, and we can loiter in the open air all day.

Bergamo is divided distinctly into an old portion, the Alta Città, which broods upon steep hills above, and a larger, newer one, which spreads out upon the plain below. From the lower level one may reach the upper by a steep enough carriage ascent with many turnings, or by a little black half-hidden *funicolare*, or cable-tram, by which you are pulled up in no time; but returning it is pleasantest to walk down at sunset, making long pauses on the different terraces, and finally taking an abrupt plunge downward through little lanes lined with stone all but overhead, the tall gray garden walls meeting the big uneven paving-stones on either side.

In the morning, however, we gave ourselves to more systematic sight-seeing. It being King Humbert's birthday, a military parade caused us to dodge about and take long detours as we searched out certain churches where lurked pictures we wished to see, and we were alone in our occupation of the public gallery for as long as we chose to remain. As we left, we asked the custodian whether he thought strangers were ever admitted to a certain private *palazzo*. He opined that they were, and we decided to apply, for we were reluctant to go away without seeing a collection of pictures so often referred

to. Our driver drew up before the usual broad entrance directly upon the street, which leads to an open inner court, and just within we found a small gray-haired *portier*, with a manner so full of courtesy and deference that we explained our wishes quite courageously. He asked for a visiting-card to carry up, and disappeared for a few moments.

We had not waited long when he came back and cheerfully invited us to proceed upstairs. At the top we should ordinarily have been met by a second servant, who would have taken us to the picture-gallery; but what was our surprise to find standing there some one whom we could not doubt to be the lady of the castle herself. She saluted us with a pleasant smile. Her face was luminous with gentleness and sweetness, and her manner full of a cordial and simple hospitality; over her soft gray hair fell some fine old lace, but the mild blue eyes below had a spent look, partly from age but more from feeble health. Her breath was somewhat labored, and she moved languidly, but she told us we were welcome to see the pictures, which she would be happy to show us herself, as she was nearly alone in the house, and we inferred that most of the household had gone to see the demonstrations in honor of the holiday being celebrated outside. She led us first to the drawing-room, where she made us sit down for a while, talking cheerfully all the time, and calling our attention to all she thought would interest us. She spoke in French, with a slightly foreign accent. When we had looked at the pictures there, and she had also shown us some in portfolios, she took us to the next room, and so on through the private apartments of the *palazzo*, even to her husband's study and her daughter's boudoir. The pictures, rare and valuable examples of some of the old masters, were scattered through the different rooms, and in some almost covered the

walls. There was no segregation of them in a chilly gallery. The family loved them and lived among them.

Of some she could tell us interesting things, of others she confessed she knew little. She encouraged us to stay, and at last even fell to speaking with feeling of her own life, and of the loss of a dear daughter whose only boy she was bringing up as a precious legacy. Just then the door opened, and a bonny, rosy-faced lad of perhaps eleven years stood on the threshold. Without a moment's hesitation he walked rapidly forward, and took both our hands, bending low over them in the prettiest way. He spoke a few words to his grandmother to prefer some request, and she then dismissed him. Then she showed us photographs and books, an autograph copy of the poems of Carmen Silva, whom she admired and was fond of as a friend, and whose photograph she proceeded to show us, taken in a group with her own family. In short, if we had brought credentials with us we could not have been made more warmly welcome, and we left with a cordial pressure of the hands on both sides that quite wiped out any uncomfortable feeling we might have experienced at first, as of having asked to be admitted where we had no right to demand it; and though it may not usually fall to one's lot to be treated quite so intimately, it is true that throughout Italy the most generous feeling exists with regard to the proprietorship of valuable pictures in private homes, and on the simple presentation of a visiting-card one can usually be permitted to enter and spend as much time before them as one pleases.

We had made a long morning, and so went to the hotel for luncheon and a rest afterwards in the empty grandeur of an upper banqueting-hall, in whose cool semi-darkness we lounged for a while, and amused ourselves with inspecting certain cabinets of china and big

Bergamo. Castle of Malpaga.

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carved ornaments, used on great occasions. We had engaged our driver of the forenoon to return and take us in the afternoon to visit a castle in the country, and when the time neared for his appearance we pushed the shutters apart and sat on a little balcony overlooking the street. Everywhere in Italy there is much preparation for gazing out of windows and leaning upon the railings of balconies. Soft cushions embellished with bright fringe are ready for lounging elbows and provoke to shameless idleness. If a sudden shower comes up, a servant flies from room to room snatching them in till the danger is past.

Punctual to the hour our *vetturino* appeared at the front door, and we went down to begin our drive.

We were on our way to the Castle of Malpaga, favorite abode of the great Colleone, famous warrior and commander-in-chief of the forces of Venice, in his day the highest military position in Italy. There he lived in the quieter intervals of his stirring life and held a court almost regal in splendor. We left the shadow of the mountains and struck out upon the plain—the great Lombard plain of upper Italy, quiet enough now, with its fertile land lying tilled in the golden sunshine, but once the bloody battle-ground of nations.

For us of the Western frontier, where leagues of land lie idle, there is something wonderfully interesting in a country where every foot of the soil is so cared for, so coaxed and nursed, as it is here, and where the highways are never deep with mud in winter and with powdery dust in summer. Here the question is not asked, "Shall we have good roads?" but roads perfectly constructed and maintained exist everywhere. So well drained are they that even after days of rain one need not hesitate to start on a drive of any length, and at intervals upon the margin of the roadway lie little symmet-

rically piled heaps of stone broken to the size of walnuts, ready for instant use should a rut or hollow appear.

Not a bit of rough, neglected, carelessly tilled earth was there anywhere in sight this afternoon, not an unsightly wire fence, not a building that was not picturesque in its own way. There is no such thing as a wooden shed or outbuilding. Everything is of stone, cement and tile, and the barns especially are many of them delightful to behold. Those for the protection of the harvest are built quite open to the air. A heavy roof of great extent is supported for its length upon brick pillars. On one side the spaces between are left open; on the other they are built up in panels of brick or tile lattice, each panel being of a different design, like pretty open basketwork of varied pattern.

A drive of an hour or so brought us to Malpaga, now given over to farm uses upon the vast estate of the Martinengo family. How it seems to link the present with the past to think that the descendants of those very Martinengos, to one of whom, five hundred years ago, Colleone married his daughter, still occupy the land; but one cannot but sigh at their indifference to the possession of such a priceless relic as this castle, it and its outbuildings being used as granaries and habitations for the various families of laborers of the farmer tenants. In the moat grow mulberry trees, and the stately rooms of the interior are heaped with grain. The best preserved of these apartments are on the ground floor and still show their frescoes in tolerable preservation—scenes from the adventurous life of Colleone, his hunting and hawking parties, his great battles, the honors done him by the city of Venice, and the visit paid him by the King of Denmark.

We were shown all over the building, and in our explorations were followed by two pretty peasant girls

full of undisguised interest and curiosity. Their wooden-soled shoes, in only the toes of which their feet seemed to be at home, clapped briskly along the floors after us, and how they did not fall off at every step was a mystery unsolved by us, but evidently causing no embarrassment to them. After we had descended from the battlements, where we tarried longest, and passed below the portcullis and out into the spacious yard, the most primitive and pictorial of ox-carts labored in and took up its position near the drawbridge; and when a score or more of idling women and brown, unkempt little children approached it and fell unconsciously into such a group as satisfied even our yearning desire for the picturesque and mediæval, we were indeed content, and left Malpaga with a feeling of happy security that filled the present nor feared disillusionment in the future.

BRESCIA.

Early in the morning I pushed open the casement window in the thick wall of my room at Brescia and looked out with the eagerness of discovery, for arriving after dark the night before there had been little opportunity for observation on the way to the hotel, transported hastily as we were by a little omnibus that jerked us unceremoniously from side to side in a thick darkness that was now and again shot through by a flash of light from the infrequent lamps that dotted the way. To have been given clean and comfortable quarters on arriving unannounced and late in the evening, we took for undeserved good fortune.

It must be allowed that we do sometimes encounter curious sleeping accommodations; for example, the pillows in Brescia appear to be stuffed with potatoes. I scorn exaggeration and do not say paving-stones, for they are

not so unyielding as that, but potatoes of various sizes, tough, resisting lumps. I petitioned our chambermaid to produce a feather pillow if the hotel yielded such a thing. She shook her head; her mind could not rise to the comprehension of such unreasonableness. She remarked that she could furnish me with a cushion for my feet! The sheets, too,— they are linen, of vast extent, thick and stiff, clammy-cold, and heavy as the leaden copes of Dante. When we have blankets we count ourselves fortunate; sometimes there are Canton flannel ones, or board-like cotton quilts of great age. But these things are not mentioned in a spirit of complaint, but merely of passing observation; they are but a part of the by-ways of Italy.

But to return to my casement. The sun was shining, everything looked fresh and lustrous. I glanced down and saw the rain-washed arcaded street. Opposite, gable windows peeped out from under scalloped red tiles, and roofs were piled one over another in irregular lines. Long tendrils of grape scrambled over trellises. Were their roots in pots, or were they absolutely in the earth below, and the vines lured to this height? The splash of a fountain could be heard not far off. How sweet it all was! I could not forbear kissing my hand to the beauty and charm of it, and instantly afterward discovered a youth gazing toward me from a window hard by. It is to be hoped that if he observed this foolish demonstration he merely put it down to the unaccountable behavior of foreigners, who must be rare in Brescia, for we have seen nothing resembling a tourist. Indeed, the expression *matto inglese*, accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders, grants resigned indulgence to many a vagary of the mad English, incomprehensible to the Italian imagination.

Breakfast we had been warned not to take in the

Brescia. Tile Lattice.

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hotel; meals were to be sought in a *caffè* near by, and we repaired to it, and sat gingerly at the end of a long table as far as possible from the cigarette-smoking frequenters of the place. The coffee, of course, was bad, the butter mere tallow, but the rolls were crisp and good and we ate them contentedly, and later strolled forth to explore.

Brescia is called the city of fountains, and an unlimited supply of cool clear water from the Alps gushes and gurgles in every direction. The fountains are centres of social life; the women surround them in the morning to wash their clothes in the marble basins and at all hours of the day come with their buckets to draw water and chat.

No guides assailed us, that precious immunity gained by being where tourists are infrequent, and becoming involved in certain unexpected turnings and intricate passages through and under buildings, we inquired our direction of a sweet-looking Italian lady. She was all helpful interest at once, and offered to walk with us, as she was to pass the street we desired to go to. As we went, we told her of our distant home and long journey, and she smiled in a pretty surprise; America appeared to be a hazy unreality to her, but she chatted pleasantly for the few minutes it took to put us upon the right way. At the corner of our street we parted with quite a ceremony of shaking hands and exchanging good wishes. In another country we should, to be sure, have been directed civilly, and we should have separated with thanks and a polite bow, but here we seemed somehow to have been made free of the city, and even if we had been inclined to feel lonely or unfriended, after that it would have been impossible.

Perhaps it was this little encounter, together with the delicious morning, that made us think Brescia so livable and homelike, and imbued us with a cordiality

for all the inhabitants from the barefooted urchins playing hide-and-seek who pattered over the solemn courts where we went to gaze at historic architecture, to the occasional old beggars in their costumes of appropriately arranged penury, who sat at convenient angles for trade. In quieter corners of the town, where the clean flagged streets only resound to the step of an occasional passer-by, we found the two little picture galleries, the foundations of different great families.

The adventure of searching out a small, seldom-frequented gallery is sure to be a pleasant one. There is first the old custodian who issues from his narrow hiding-place on the ground floor to gaze at you over his spectacles and consent to let you inspect his treasures. Then perhaps you pass through a sunny little inner court, where a bit of green grass smiles up at a dislocated old fountain, and a tossing vine throws flickering shadows down between the cloister columns; and then up various flights of stairs and through resounding passages, till at last a big door is unlocked with a key of pounds' weight, and you are admitted to the society you love. If he is an undesirable custodian he then stays, giving you superfluous information and calling your attention to the pictures you least wish to see, with the aim of slightly enlarging that fee which will terminate the visit. In this case he must be kindly but firmly discouraged. If, on the other hand, he is of the order we best like, he observes that he has an errand downstairs, and then leaves us to range about at will, to find what we are there to seek, perhaps to neglect all the big canvases and spend our time in some corner with treasures which we like to look upon as discoveries of our own. Blissful, satisfying hours these; tranquillity and peace pervade them; unquiet memories, teasing thoughts vanish away in the atmosphere of these beloved retreats.

It is hard for the lover of early Italian pictures to give a measured reason for his feelings. He has little to offer to the scoffer who gains a cheap compensation for an arid state of mind in the ridicule of what is sacred to the believer. The latter only knows that he loves to stand before these canvases, looking down at him to-day with all their reverential purpose, their unapproachable beauty, their heavenly simplicity. They hold the spirit of another age, which has perished out of ours never to return, and yet whose hallowing presence still hovers in the art it has handed down to us and whose influence will penetrate the heart that is open to it and fill it with a pure and unalloyed happiness.

In the afternoon we were prepared to go to Paitone, a hamlet lying some miles out in the country, and having found a driver who knew the way we started forth. Can anything be pleasanter than leaning comfortably back in a little victoria, so low and so open that you are at once brought into intimacy with the roadside, jogging along through a new and beautiful country, sweet with all the sights and sounds of spring? Our faces were turned eastward so that the mountains lay on our left, and we followed the curvings of the foothills while on our right spread the great plain. Ditches bounded the road on either side—but alas! why is there not some endearing term for ditches? These were miniature canals, full of clear water and bordered by flowering weeds and tortured old pollards whose ever-renewed efforts to grow had been so often pitilessly suppressed that the most fantastic and knobby contortions were the result. At intervals we passed through little villages, awakening a passing interest in the rural inhabitants and feeling even more in them. At length we approached Paitone, and I began to explain to our driver that our goal was a certain chapel in which was the most famous madonna of the

region, which we had come from America to see. He was quite ignorant of any such sanctuary, but would make inquiries, which he proceeded to do of the inhabitants, who proved to be as unconscious of it as he. At length, however, the church was pointed out, a little edifice some distance away on the rocky ledge of a hill, and we crossed the fields toward it. Below it we gave the driver leave to go back to the public house, there to rest his horses and refresh himself while we paid our orisons, and as the little carriage cheerfully rattled away a great quietness seemed to settle upon everything. Not a human being was in sight excepting the bent figure of an old woman descending the irregular steps above the church, with fagots upon her head.

"Let us take a picture of that dear little place against the sky before we climb up to it," said my companion, "for when we come out the light will be gone."

We did so, reverently, and then mounted the steps and entered. It was empty, but that was all the better, and our eyes roved in search of the picture. It was not in sight, but a picture there was, with a curtain drawn closely over it, as is the custom where there is one too precious to be exposed excepting on special occasions. We now found the need of a custodian and began to search for one. We knocked at doors, we walked round the outside of the building, but all to no purpose. Dared we with profane hands draw that curtain, and perhaps be caught in the very act! We hesitated before temptation, but we yielded, and stealthily pulled the cords that rolled up the silken barrier. Alas, our madonna was not there! This poor insignificant canvas was but a mockery of what we were looking for. Hastily we attempted to cover it again, and oh, horror! the cords became entangled, the curtain stuck fast half-way down and all our efforts to dislodge it failed. There was no concealing our profanation.

Brescia. On the Way to Paitone.

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Dismay seized us. Two guilty beings hastened from that church door looking fearfully to be met upon the threshold by an enraged priest. But fortune sometimes favors the evil-doer; all was as solitary as before. Our spirits rose as we discovered over the edge of the terrace a little stone building and high-walled garden, wherein a priest was pacing up and down, and our instantly ripened plan was to ascertain from that priest the real location of the chapel and then escape before he had discovered our crime in the church. We descended to the level of the door in the wall and knocked boldly; after a time it was opened and the pleasant-mannered ecclesiastic listened to our questions. The chapel? Oh, that was it, high up above us, half an hour's walk away! We were dismayed. Night would soon be upon us. What was to be done? To go away defeated was not to be borne, however. We thanked him, and hurried off in the direction indicated. We passed a few goats and children upon the way. The path climbed and twisted between rocks and scrubby bushes, and we drew nearer and nearer to the little chapel, so much more charming than the small Renaissance building we had been mistakenly sent to.

Some three hundred years ago when the plague was sweeping away the population of this country, and terror and suffering spread far and wide, the pitying Madonna appeared upon this hillside to a deaf-and-dumb boy, so, upon the site of the miracle this little votive chapel was built, and for it was painted the finest work of one of the greatest North Italian masters, Moretto. It was this that we were eager to see, and at last we reached the elevation of the entrance, upon the shelf hollowed out for it against the declivity. But here the door was fast, and no rapping evoked an answer. Panic seized us again—was all our effort to be for naught? We held our breath and listened, and presently heard the cracked

notes of a ditty interrupted by measured jerks and grunts as, apparently, some rural implement struck the soft clods of a garden-bed. We ran to the parapet at one side to look over, and there beheld an old man thus musically lightening his evening labors. We hailed him, and he started and looked up in great surprise. Could we, might we, be allowed entrance to the chapel? He cordially consented. He had expected no one, he had not heard the Signore knocking, and he hastened from the little vegetable-bed and disappeared, presently to reappear at the door of the chapel, which he threw open for us.

The valley below was already in shadow, but the last rays of the setting sun entered with us, and lay along the floor, as we stood looking toward the high altar. It was all dark above and the altar itself was already obscured, but a wonderful and unearthly presence seemed to be there, poised in the air, and floating down toward us. The form was of the size of life, the cloud-like folds of pure white drapery melted into the darkness behind, and the face was full of ineffable tenderness and compassion. It was inexpressibly beautiful and touching.

There was something sacred in the hour, the loneliness, the withdrawal of it all to the solitude of this remote spot. It was strangely moving, and sterner heretics than those who stood before it silent might have yielded in that moment to a feeling strongly akin to the devotion of its humblest worshipers.

MANTUA.

Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas
Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
Mincius et tenera prætexit harundine ripas.
—Verg. *Georg.* III.

The slow-flowing Mincio almost surrounds Mantua and broadens out till it embraces the town with a chain of lakes. The clear shallow water as it lay blue under the sky this afternoon was very lovely. An occasional boat drew long ripples across it, sedges grew up through it at intervals, and a golden haze seemed to hover over its pure, still reaches. We hung upon one of the low bridges whose marching arches span it, and wondered if the water at least looked just the same to that "courteous Mantuan soul" whom Dante apostrophizes, and afterward to the great Florentine himself. Where the lakes leave off marshes begin and so complete the boundary. The town is busy enough in the crowded arcades of its center, but out here was silence and a far level horizon, and one could contemplate its strange historic past, so great and various, from the time of Vergil down to that of the mighty Gonzagas who held court here for generations, and have left a castle and a palace that alone would house the population of a town.

The castle abuts upon the river, and when we left the bridge we passed beneath and around it into a spacious gravel courtyard, full of dignified trees and ancient stone benches. Here again we loitered and as we sat, letting our eyes wander over the immense extent of roofs and walls, we were tempted to wonder where the palace ended and the other structures began. But presently, when we had entered it and wandered through what appeared to be miles of stately rooms, suite after suite, floor after floor, court after court, we could have believed that not only the quarter of the city we had just seen was all comprised in the palace, but that nearly all Mantua was. The most captious traveler might here acknowledge that he had at last seen something which in extent and magnificence satisfied his ideas of royalty, and yet this was not a kingdom but only an Italian duchy of

extent that to-day seems toylike to have been of such importance.

Of course, much of the palace is ruinous now, and it fills one with speculation that rivers of wealth should have been poured out to line it with such a luxury of marble, mosaic and fresco, and then that it should have been allowed to go to decay. The ceilings, ponderous with carving and warm with the rich subdued color and tarnished gilding that adhere to them still, are wonders, and even the walls of balconies and outer courts are enriched with painting by the first masters of that day. In one place a sort of hanging garden had been constructed upon the level of the second story, in which still flourish sturdy shrubs and a large magnolia tree.

The guide offered to spare us certain wings of the building, but of all that was shown we were determined to leave nothing unseen. In a smaller place we might have felt fatigue, but here the very vastness spurred us—we would explore every possibility.

At last we found the strangest suite of apartments that surely ever was fashioned—drawing-room, bedrooms, a chapel, even a long staircase, and all adapted to the size of dwarfs. "The Gonzagas kept a breed of them," the chronicler crudely remarks. We sat upon the doll-like seats niched in the walls; the small windows admitted but a half-light from an inner court. What was the existence like that went on here among these poor little fragments of humanity that lived their lives and reproduced their kind to be the playthings of the giants they served? In the few frescoes by the great Mantegna that remain and still look down from the walls, carrying the conviction of true delineation, there appear among the plain, unflattered faces and square figures of the Gonzaga family some of these grotesque pigmies, large-headed, abnormal, with something stolid

and patient about them, like certain pet animals, which indeed they resemble.

It will give some idea of the almost boundless extent of the Castle of the Gonzagas to add that beyond all we explored there was still room in it to form the spacious barracks of Mantua. At its outer boundary it forms one side of a great stone-flagged parallelogram, the Piazza Sordello. Piazza Sordello! how the words fire the fancy, as the name of this splendid and obvious square seems to put reality into the tantalizing and elusive personality that Browning teases us with! On the opposite side an even more ancient-looking edifice attracted our attention; very hoary and time-gnawed was its façade, and from the line of its top, in a long row, soared the Ghibelline swallow-tails.

I asked our driver, as we went away, what it was, as the guide-book made no mention of it. "Palazzo Buonacolsi," he replied. Then I remembered that the fortune of the Gonzagas was founded when the first one of their number who became prominent murdered his master, the head of the Buonacolsi family, and became paramount in the city. So, for the four hundred years that the Gonzagas ruled, there before them for all those generations stood the reproach of their beginning! Did any of them wince at it? Perhaps not. Those were strange and terrible times and compunction found little place in them. Out of the mass of the Buonacolsi palace rises a square brick tower, many stories in height, but unornamented, and with very few openings. Such a tower is inviting anywhere, for from its top one may study at leisure the topography of the country, but in a flat city in the midst of a wide plain, it is invaluable. We asked to be allowed to climb it, and through the waste and lumber-encumbered places at its foot were made free of it.

Part way up, above all the tall roofs near it there is

a small window, and outside it hangs a square iron cage. At the sight of this sinister-looking object vague memories of grewsome tales stirred in the mind. It was not high enough to stand up in nor long enough to lie down in. We asked and found our conjectures confirmed. Into that horrible thing criminals were forced, there to be left, in the view of all the city, to die of hunger and thirst or the fiery heat of their summer climate, a climate where no laborer can work upon the streets in the middle hours of the day, as stone and iron from the mere effect of the sun's rays scorch the hands. What sights and sounds must men and women, and innocent children as well, have been witnesses to in those centuries! The mind shrinks from dwelling on it.

One goes also to the Palazzo del Te just without the city gates, but it need not keep the traveler long. It has no attractiveness of site or of architecture and its ugly frescoes, enormous in size and uninteresting in subject, mark a stage in the decline of art that may well weigh upon the spirits. Memory, if it returns to Mantua, will hardly pause there; but will rather roam through the untenanted vastness of the ducal palace, or dally beside the quiet reedy lakes.

FERRARA.

"Ferrara, su le strade che Ercole primo lanciava
ad incontrar le Muse pellegrine arrivanti,
e allinearon elle gli emuli viali d' ottave
storiando la tomba di Merlino profeta,
come, o Ferrara, bello ne la splendida ora d' aprile
ama il memore sole tua solitaria pace!"
—CARDUCCI. *Alla Città di Ferrara.*

In order not to make a long detour we took a local train directly across the country to Ferrara, lured by the great saving in distance which our map showed this route

to offer. Afterward, however, we were left in doubt as to whether the longest detour in express trains might not have taken less time than we spent upon this guileless little railway, which wriggled about across the fertile unhealthy plain, stopping incessantly at hamlets whose appearance seemed to make its calling at them utterly superfluous. It was a warm afternoon, but at least the train was not crowded, and we could spread ourselves over all the space it was possible to occupy and monopolize two windows apiece.

The shadows were beginning to grow long by the time we paused at the station for Ferrara, which is far enough away from the town to make arriving at it seem an experience as rural as those we had just passed through. We were glad to get down and take the first little carriage in sight, while a blue-bloused *facchino* went to find our bags. This immunity from lifting luggage is one of the comfortable things about traveling here. There is no need to carry so much as a hand-satchel unless one pleases. When you stop, a motion from the window of your car brings a uniformed porter instantly to your compartment, who shoulders everything you possess and precedes you to the carriage-stand outside. There he deposits it and you, and if you have anything registered takes your check and goes to find it for you, while you wait at ease in the carriage. In the same way, when you are taking a train a porter steps forward and receives all your belongings from the driver of your carriage, so that you may travel without trunks if you please and with everything you need in the form of hand-luggage with no inconvenience or burden to yourself.

From the railway station of Ferrara one drives through broad avenues bordered by trees to the boundary of the city and then through a pretty parklike garden, straight to the famous old ruddy brick castle,

with its four big towers and its deep moat still full of water; a fine example, and almost too scrupulously kept in repair, so perfectly preserved and restored is it. One of the buildings in the circle surrounding the castle at a proper interval of separation, we found, much to our satisfaction, to be our *albergo*, the Golden Star, and a smiling young waiter assigned a room to our use which had several windows looking out directly upon it. Being but one flight up, we shook our heads at the prospect of a night's sleep broken by street noises, but we were assured that this was really the best apartment and the only one unoccupied, and so accepted it, though we never afterwards discovered evidences of a crowded state of things nor did we from first to last come upon more than two other people in the dining-room where we took our meals.

To this cool dining-room, with its floor of umber tiles, we had but to pass by a single door from our bedroom, and we liked the look of it, arranged with small tables, one of which, in a corner next a window, we chose as exactly suited to our needs. Having refreshed ourselves a little we made haste to save the remaining daylight, and ran downstairs and across to the edge of the moat. It was such a comfort that it was still there! Up in the castle, where once that most brilliant and witty court of the Estes had its seat, are now municipal offices, and impertinent telegraph wires launch themselves at these walls that have looked down with disdain upon battle and siege. We pictured the beautiful and fascinating Eleanora d' Este, in the great *salon* above, the centre of a willing homage, and in the background the sombre figure of Tasso. And then, reaching a little further back into history, imagined the notorious Lucrezia Borgia arriving, a somewhat battered bride, to the husband at first so reluctant to receive her.

Ferrara. At the Cathedral Door.

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At this hour everything was so silent and deserted that we had hard work to find any one who could open doors for us, for we had decided to penetrate the dungeons before we slept. At length, however, an old crone was unearthed whose appearance suggested her having been handed down from an earlier century, and with her we descended to the very roots of the Lion Tower, and stood in those two dismal cells where, out of hearing of each other, Hugo d'Este, in all the splendor of his youth and strength, and the beautiful but frail Parisina suffered worse than death for the eight days before they were beheaded. What, for that terrible week, were the ruminations of the injured husband in his gloomy chambers above, whose youthful second wife and idolized son had wrecked his happiness? The old historian of Ferrara says his greatest grief was for the faithless son, whom he adored, and whom he had taken such fatal pains to throw into the society of Parisina, that the young stepmother should love him as dearly as he himself did. He adds that after Hugo's execution the wretched father gave himself up to the wildest transports of agony and in a burst of vengeance decreed that if there were any other wife in high places in Ferrara known to be guilty of the same crime as Parisina she should forthwith suffer death. In consequence of this, he avers, more than one execution of ladies of rank took place, over against the castle.

In the semi-darkness of these horrible dens filled with odors unspeakable, the idea of a speedy beheading must have offered itself as a release. We hastened up into the air with a sudden panic of infection upon us.

For purposes of thorough ventilation and purification we wandered in the open air till dinner-time, and found entertainment for eyes and imagination on all sides. Close at hand stood the superb old Lombard façade of the cathedral, with its intricate ornamentation and its

inexpressibly alluring grotesque beasts patiently upholding the weight of the portal. These bloodthirsty griffins and nameless monsters exercise such a fascination upon my companion that she can with difficulty be torn from their society once they are discovered. Their hooked beaks, their terror-striking expression, the unfortunate warrior or bull who usually writhes beneath their claws,—all, all are captivating, and many are the portraits of them that we bear away with us.

Conformably to our misgivings the night was a disturbed one and the ever-recurring question presented itself anew, When do Italians sleep? I remember a traveler's once remarking that the population of a certain Spanish city could be divided into two classes, those people who went to bed at four and those who got up at three, and so, I surmise, is it throughout Italy. At no hour of the night does silence fold its wings over an Italian city. At two, at three, at four, extended cheerful conversations may go on just below your window, exuberant youths pass down the streets, tuning their voices to high-keyed songs, wagons crash and rattle over the stony pavements, and even the street-cleaner finds some one abroad to exchange compliments with, and they keep it up in stentorian tones as long as they are within hearing of each other.

"Looking up the house of Ariosto" has a sound of perfunctory sight-seeing, and yet it was a charming little episode, a rare pleasure. There is a seclusion and simplicity about the small edifice that make one love it at once, and it had slipped from my mind that the pretty motto, "Parva sed apta mihi," was the one he composed for this retreat of his later life. Small it is, for, like other poets, his greatness did not save him from living and dying poor, but it is more attractive than many a larger abode. There are four rooms upon the ground floor,

two upon either side of a hallway where the sunlight falls through tiny panes of glass upon ancient woodwork, polished and deepened in color by wear and time, and beyond lies a little garden protected by its high walls in a privacy as complete as that of the interior of the house. It is fragrant with old-fashioned flowers of perhaps the very same kinds that blossomed for the poet. A gentle-voiced, patient woman accompanied us through it and seemed pleased with our pleasure. As she told us what she could of the past of the building, which indeed was not much, she stooped and gathered a flower here and there, and she tried conscientiously to make the collection include every variety in the beds before giving it to us; so that when we think of Ferrara, the memory of it is still sweetened with the odor of Ariosto's flowers and quickened by the warmth of his sunny garden.

SOJOURNING IN FLORENCE

Arno gentil, fiorenti
Prati delle Cascine,
Leggiadre palazzine
Superbi monumenti,

Bianche ville ridenti
Sparse per le colline,
Vezzose Fiorentine
Dai musicali accenti

Bella città di fiori
Piena di glorie sante,
Cinta di eterni allori,

Culla immortal di Dante
Che l' universo onori
T' amo come un amante !
— E. De Amicis. A Firenze.

WONDER if any place in the world has the charm of Florence to those who love her. The return to her after years is a keen delight, and simply to tread her streets, to stand upon her bridges, gives a thrill so moving that tears are not far from the surface. To explain a statement thus verging on the sentimental, to analyze the charm that is so consummate, and at the same time to avoid emotional

exaggeration would not be easy. I might dwell upon her exquisite situation, her marvelous treasures of art and architecture, and the wonderful, the stupendous history of her past, that seems to breathe life into the very stones of her streets and to rise up and envelop one who passes along them; but how could I transfer to those who have never seen her what can only be felt here on the spot—and even then not every one falls a victim to her fascinations!

I met our good Doctor C—— yesterday on the famous corner of a certain street,—only to pass there on the smallest errand fills me with visions. And what said he? Why, glancing about with a sort of provisional impatience, he remarked that it was wasting time to be here when one might be stopping in Rome. I quoted to him a saying adapted by a friend of ours, "See Naples, visit Rome, live in Florence," at which he merely looked scornful and changed the subject. And so will I, and tell the homely details of our arrival and establishment here.

The first night was spent at the Anglo-American, an excellent, quiet hotel, a little too far down the river, but with many advantages, including that of an unusually agreeable proprietor. This was but a stepping-stone, however, to what we meant to compass, which was to become inmates in an Italian household where we should hear no English, and, if possible, see something of the life of a Florentine family. We had the address of such a place, and, searching it out promptly, found we could be received at once, and what was better, that we should be the only strangers in the house. So we moved directly and became dwellers in the street of the Holy Spirit, and entirely comfortable and contented.

The Casa T—— comprises our handsome, cordial hostess, a widow, and her five children, from the Signo-

rina Maria, who may be twenty-three, down to little Pierino, aged ten, a beautiful child, the moulding and coloring of whose charming face it is a pleasure to gaze upon, though all the family are well endowed with good looks. The two eldest are daughters, already busy teaching, the three youngest, sons, still in school, though rather irregularly so, for the Signora is a somewhat too indulgent mother, it is easy to see. As for our surroundings, we occupy one floor of an old *palazzo*, which, as every one knows, is the custom here where a family does not have an entire house to itself, the different floors being let to different people, and the entrance and stairway serving as common property. Our stairs, by the way, are of evident antiquity; the lift of each one is quite beyond the altitude of ease, and the tread is a ponderous slab of stone, worn to a sort of bevel at the edge, by the passage of centuries of steps, no doubt, giving one a slightly giddy feeling as of pitching forward while one descends.

On our ground floor is a large hall, now the property of a society, which keeps much gaudy regalia there; the next floor has a more imposing front door than ours, and the dwellers therein appear to keep rather finer company. I observed that carriages bring gayly dressed people to it, and yesterday I saw an example of a curious and rather undesirable fashion, fallen out of use in America, but evidently still in full force here, that of dressing sisters exactly alike, so that they suggest a brood of fledglings. In this case three brunettes, ranging perhaps between twenty-eight and thirty-five, with fatigued, indifferent faces, appeared in three showy gowns of what is known as electric blue, with three hats of bizarre shape and bewildering variety of color. The conspicuousness of this effect thrice repeated seemed to render the mode all the more objectionable.

However, no matter what elegance stops at the first floor, we rest satisfied that our own *secondo piano* is the really choice location, as so much lighter and more airy, nor do we hear even an echo of the high life below stairs or the proceedings of the humbler *ménage* above us, the thickness of the stone floors preventing all discomfort from noise, that great objection to living in such close proximity to others in our own less thoroughly constructed houses. There are many unlooked-for possibilities of space and privacy in old buildings such as these, perhaps once the centres of a wealthy patriarchal life, but now fallen to the uses of a humbler housekeeping. The effort of the present day is to so plan a house that every foot of space has its immediate use, and thus to the practical and economical American the big corridors and lofty rooms, which perhaps serve merely as separation or entrance to certain others, and often enjoyed by families in very small circumstances, are a fresh surprise. Yet this space, which may be regarded as superfluous, saves the necessity of all occupations, sounds and odors being shared at once, so to speak, by all the members of a family, and one is apt sooner or later to incline toward dropping the compact as a standard of desirability, and adopting that of the spacious, as affording much advantage of restfulness and quiet.

For ourselves, we have but one room between us, it being so large that we find it easy to regard it as equal to the two we at first demanded. Its stone floor is covered with a sort of enamel, laid on to represent a granite centre tastefully relieved by a green border! Rugs are spread beside the beds and tables. We have two iron bedsteads with little stands beside them bearing tall candlesticks, two broad washstands with a towel-rack between as big as a donkey, a dressing-table, a chest of drawers, an extensive wardrobe, a roomy table for books

and writing materials, and several chairs. But perhaps the most important piece of furniture is a tall, circular earthenware stove, much embellished and surmounted by a Parian bust swathed in white gauze. The effect of it is so imposing that when it is lighted we almost seem to be deriving warmth from a historic monument. But it is not often brought into use. Of a chill evening Gina brings us each a *cassettina*, a little object that in shape might be a jewel-casket somewhat worn and blackened, with handles like an old-fashioned basket. This is filled with hot charcoal and packed with ashes, and used as a footstool is most comforting. When Gina comes to announce dinner she catches them up and carrying them out to the *sala* deposits them under the table, that we may dine without resting our feet upon the frigid stone floor. All the furniture mentioned, however, does not crowd our apartment, in which there is plenty of space besides. It is lofty enough to make two stories of the common height, and has a beamed ceiling painted and decorated in blue and white. There are also two great arched casement windows, furnished with outside and inside shutters, and large enough for a procession to march through. High on the wall over them are huge yellow canopies.

Gina, the little maid who waits upon us, is most assiduous. Instead of walking, she runs at full speed to do our bidding. Although almost overcome by bashfulness in our presence, she yearns to serve us and invents things to do for us. She is grieved if she cannot have all our various garments to brush and our shoes to polish every day, and she bids us good-night each evening in a little set speech in which we are first implored to permit her to assist us further if possible, and then commended to the Powers for protection and blessing during the interval till she sees us again.

Florence. Fountain of Bacchus.

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When we are ready for coffee in the morning we pull a long, heavy bell-cord suspended from the upper regions, and in a few moments breakfast is prepared for us in the adjoining *salon*, where we have it alone, the family being already dispersed to its various occupations, after which we go forth, perhaps first for a walk and then to study the galleries, keeping the freshest hours of the day for the pictures. To these peaceful and congenial haunts we carry our handbooks and wander about or sit on soft divans studying at our ease. At noon we go home, and the Signora lunches with us. The food is good and delicately cooked, and there is only too much anxiety that there shall be a choice of dishes to suit our taste. Luncheon, or *colazione* as it is called, will perhaps consist of the following courses: first, macaroni, then shirred eggs, cutlets with fried potatoes, fruit, nuts, etc. Crisp rolls and good wine accompany the meal. Bread, by the way, is an article upon which American and Italian tastes differ. The white flour rolls which are taken for us do not find acceptance with the rest of the family, who prefer cuts from the big loaf, darker, coarser in texture, and unsalted. Butter is a comparatively unimportant article of diet; we do not see it excepting at our early coffee and then it is a concession to foreign taste. It is sometimes served with cheese and biscuit as a course at *colazione*.

The afternoon is left for more diversified occupations, wandering through the old streets to verify historic sites, exploring churches, and driving to the suburbs. At seven the whole family is assembled, and we dine in a big *sala* in another part of the establishment. Here a lively conversation goes on, and the harassed Americans follow what they can of it, but as the young people talk with fearful rapidity and in general at least three at a time, it is a breathless pursuit. It is said that one of the daugh-

ters speaks a little English, but if so she is too shy to try it. We, on the contrary, plunge into the conversation in the most reckless way. When we get into a hopeless entanglement the whole family rushes impetuously to our assistance, guessing at what we wish to say or supplying missing words. At this meal the usual courses of meat and vegetables follow one another, but pastry and sweets are uncommon; instead of the latter, fresh fruits, figs and nuts are served. All the children drink wine freely, down to the youngest, but add a good deal of water to it. The wine is brought to the house at intervals and poured into a tall red jar, a true Greek *pithos* in shape, which stands in the hall. From this it is drawn into decanters for the table. Many other details of housekeeping differ from ours; things which we are accustomed to see done in the house are sent out, and vice versa. For example, the clothes are taken away to be washed but brought back to be starched and ironed, and fastidious housekeepers often have the macaroni made at home, where, upon a large table, you may see a vast, unbroken sheet of it spread out, reduced by tireless labor to the thinness of paper. In a small family in Florence a cook receives in the neighborhood of five dollars a month; a waitress about three; if, however, the family that employs the latter is a fashionable one, and she is also capable of acting in the capacity of lady's maid, she may even demand ten dollars. The rent of an apartment such as this, of fourteen rooms, in a locality convenient and good but not fashionable, is upwards of a hundred and sixty dollars a year. In that quarter of the city where foreign residents most do congregate, and the buildings are more modern and less interesting, rents are much higher.

While upon domestic subjects I must revert for a moment to our little maid, Gina, of whom we have been

growing quite fond. It appears that she is the centre of a little drama of love and jealousy, in consequence of which we are to lose her this week. Nunzia, the servant who preceded her, was incorrigibly dishonest, and in the end the Signora was obliged to dismiss her. She went away wrathful, and has now managed to stir up trouble for her innocent successor. Gina is a *contadina* and lived with her parents in a little village not far from Florence. Not being very strong she was unable to accompany her brothers and sisters to their work in the fields, and her part, therefore, was to remain alone at home, attending to the indoor affairs of the family. This she found very lonely and so preferred to earn her living as housemaid here, where she has a good home and labor not beyond her strength. Gina, however, has a lover, and to work upon his jealousy became the aim of the wicked Nunzia. She therefore wrote to him in a spirit of friendly warning, and told him that his Gina had an admirer in Florence, which was the reason she was so much fonder of staying with Signora T—— than of remaining at home. This terrible accusation fired his Italian heart and he has written to say that Gina must return. If she persists in staying away he will conclude that she no longer loves him and renounce her. At this Gina's parents are in a state of mind, for the lover is a merchant, comfortably off, and a most advantageous match. It is to be hoped that Gina has a sincere affection for her *fidanzato;* indeed, she may well be devoted to him and yet prefer to earn her trousseau here; but be that as it may, when she leaves to spend Holy Week at home, as is the custom here, she will not return and we shall miss her.

Another member of the family of whom I have not yet made mention is a small, white, curly dog, the property of Maria. Stellina is her name, and she is a dog of marked personality. There is obstinacy in the

inflexible curve of her tail; there is cynicism in the corner of her sharp little eye, and the air with which she patrols the front hall is nothing short of domineering. She is devoted to her young mistress, but chary of her favors to outsiders, and though she occasionally accompanies Maria to see us in the evening, she allows no familiarity from us but sits by in dignified silence while the visit lasts and retires sedately with Maria at its close, no blandishments inducing her to remain with us or to unbend while in our presence in the smallest frolic. In short, it will be seen that reserve and sobriety are features of her character, and yet Stellina is not invulnerable; there is a weak spot in her armor—a subject that is unendurable to her. Naturally, the part of good breeding would be to avoid this painful topic, and yet such is human nature that we cannot refrain from bringing it up occasionally just to see her cool superiority ruffled, her haughty indifference broken down. It appears that some time ago another dog, by name Diana, absorbed part of the affections of the family. Of this rival she was madly jealous, and, though Diana has long been dead, the emotions she awakened in the breast of Stellina are as lively as ever, and I confess it is an experiment approaching vivisection in cruelty to play upon the sensibilities of this tiny animal, as I have owned that we now and then do. On a first mention of Diana's name Stellina sits up straight, her little body stiffens, her eye flashes and she seems to make an effort to keep her feelings well in hand. But it is useless; at a second she loses all control of herself and flies into a transport of anger and fury, in which she darts wildly about, apparently looking for the hated being whose presence she dreads. She searches in every hole and corner, barking frantically; she roots under the furniture; she even scratches at doors and listens at the

Florence. Via di Belvedere.

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crack underneath, ever and anon flying back to her mistress' side, lest in her momentary absence Diana should have usurped her place. It is a good while before she can be calmed on these occasions, and for some time thereafter she is nervous and uneasy. She glances restlessly about, emits a short yelp now and then, and as she gradually grows quieter gazes up at Maria with pleading eyes and a low whine, which tells her suffering so speakingly that we one and all resolve not again to be the wicked means of her torture.

The weather, which has been capricious, is now mild and warm again, and out-of-door explorations are more tempting. The flower market is a very pleasant resort on the days when it is held. It takes place at the Mercato Nuovo in the heart of the city, a fine structure, in form an open square, the roof of which is supported on columns. To stray into it is to find the air loaded with fragrance and thousands of cut flowers lying in heaps for sale, their tempting masses offered so cheaply as to fill one with the desire to carry them all away at once. The next day, however, all will have been changed, and the Mercato Nuovo have perhaps become a depot for the sale of straw hats. In the centre of its stone floor is a disk of white marble, quite inconspicuous, and yet in the past it must often have supported keen misery and mortification; it is nothing less than the spot upon which bankrupts were obliged to sit exposed to public humiliation. It is needless to say that even in Florence that usage passed out of date long since, and now I fear too little obloquy is attached to failure to meet business obligation here as elsewhere. Not far from this spot sits a merchant presiding over a tub nearly full of yellow lupine seeds in salt water, a delicacy only to be appreciated by local palates, and failing to tempt us even upon the warm recommendation of the

vendor. At this point we emerge from the market-place, passing the great bronze boar who presides over its fountain. From here it is but a step to the Piazza della Signoria, the core of the city's present life and past history. There towers the old town hall, the Palazzo Vecchio, that superb pile, with its nobly mounting tower, old enough to have looked down upon a long succession of events.

What brilliant and glittering spectacles has it witnessed, what noisy and picturesque festivals presided over! And yet those associations that most haunt the memory are the terrible ones — the cruelty, the torture, the agony that it has witnessed. Strange and dreadful memories these, and yet, perhaps, in the midst of such recollections one's eyes light upon an object close by which starts another train of thought. If in this place human life has been held cheaply, how reverently has beauty been regarded, for here stands a famous statue upon its pedestal of elaborate workmanship, exquisite and fragile carved marble, and here it has stood in the open air for three hundred years, perfectly accessible to all the mischievously disposed urchins of the city, and yet it is unbroken.

In the neighborhood of this piazza cluster memorable buildings, and streets lead from it to history and romance. Much has been torn away, sacrificed to the too progressive spirit of the modern Florentines; but though one must not insist that they shall remain in mouldering, unsanitary buildings for the sake of pilgrims in search of the picturesque, they might have been less uncompromising in the fury of thoroughness with which they have wiped away whole quarters. We, for instance, are too late to know the pictorial decay of the Mercato Vecchio, but photographs not many years old show us that delight of artists as it then was, and we cannot but

regard it with a fond regret. To-day, as the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, nothing could exceed its substantial propriety, but its charm is gone.

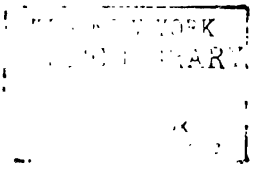
Within its precincts we have watched with much curiosity the working of one of the institutions of the Italy of to-day, the periodical lottery. It was quite an exciting scene. The great square began to fill at five in the evening, and gradually it became black with a solid mass of thousands of people facing the pavilion where the drawing was to take place. It looked as though most of the population of Florence had assembled. All purchasers of chances held their tickets in their hands and had supplied themselves with pencils, so that shortly something very like a gigantic game of lotto began. Each ticket had fifteen figures printed upon it and as fast as a number was drawn and exposed, if it corresponded with the one upon your list, you at once marked it off, the first card filled taking the prize. This, it will be seen, keeps everybody eager and excited, with the hope of winning, till the last moment. The person next me had all but five numbers marked when the winner was announced. This drawing proved a short one, occupying only about twenty-five minutes. At intervals some portion of the crowd swayed and shouted, but when at last one man had filled his card, it seemed somehow to be communicated to the whole mass at once, and a general hubbub took place for a short time while the winner made his way to the platform to receive his thousand *lire*, a goodly sum to write or speak but in reality amounting to something less than two hundred dollars in American money. The crowd began to flow away through the streets leading out of the piazza, and we watched the winner walk off, a well-to-do looking man of middle age, leading a sturdy little boy by the hand, numerous stragglers skipping

about and before them to have a look at the hero of the occasion. It is said that the lottery is an important source of government revenue, and the whole spectacle is a rather uncivilized one and an undignified method for a government to resort to, as, of course, it impoverishes the poor and ignorant of the people most.

With the happy inconsequence of those who, when in Rome, enjoy doing as the Romans do, a day that begins in the shadow of the sanctuary may end in the glare of the theatre, and so one morning we dutifully carried our guide-books and our Ruskin to Santa Croce, there to look at some celebrated frescoes which are very hard to see, and only to be puzzled out early in the forenoon of a day when the sun rises clear. The weather is so variable that this is not an easy condition to secure, and we grew rather cross with straining our eyes to discern almost invisible objects, for the sun would come out for ten seconds and then retire behind a cloud for ten minutes, and at last we gave it up for that day and walked down the nave, as directed by Mr. Ruskin to do, so as to inspect a certain one of two funereal tablets in the floor. There lies a forgotten worthy, whose features have long since been trodden into smooth blankness by the feet of careless worshipers, but three folds in his cap remain, and likewise the tassels of his marble cushion; and if you can see why these, in comparison with the adjoining tablet, are so supremely right, you are worthy to study the art of Florence; otherwise, says Mr. Ruskin, you may as well depart from the city at once, as nothing here will ever do you any good.

My two companions refused to lend themselves to these pious investigations, and railed at Mr. Ruskin and at those who weakly submit to his tyrannous exactions; but that dear man's testiness and petulance should but elicit an indulgent smile, while for all his great and

Florence. Vicolo d'Oro.



endearing qualities there is room for love and reverence, and one likes to try sometimes to put oneself in his mood and see with his eyes. Determined, therefore, on behaving with decorum, I was just beginning to discover the immense superiority of the folds and tassels, when, oh, horror! I found I was examining the wrong ones. Conceive my feelings. Humbled and chastened, I meekly left the church and repaired to the Pitti Palace, where there were pictures in the full light of day with the names of the artists upon the frames, so that one could not make the mistake of admiring the wrong ones.

On the evening of this day we were induced to go to the theatre, to see a wonderful spectacular ballet. We understood that it was to come on at the beginning of the performance, but found on arriving that we must first listen to a mediocre little opera in two long acts. The singing was not very good, and it was surprising to find the audience no more discriminating than one in an American town might have been. It did not appear to matter whether the singer was exactly on the key; as long as the note was loud enough and long enough she was applauded to the echo. The orchestra was full and good, and the theatre a large one, but less well furnished and handsomely finished than might have been expected. The opera at last drew to a tragic close, and after the heroine and her lover had been satisfactorily stabbed, and the husband had gone mad, the curtain rose again on the famous ballet, and truly there could scarcely have been a more bewildering display. The immense stage was one blaze of light and glitter and appeared to extend into infinite distance. This effect was cleverly carried out by having children to represent the people in the background and on the heights, thus aiding the perspective.

One could hardly imagine anything prettier or

more captivating than the first effect until the second part, when the three hundred dancers came out in white wigs and the daintiest court costumes, of course shortened to the necessary brevity. The color effects were managed marvelously, swaying lines or masses of pale pink, intertwined with others of pale-blue and silver, sea-green and gold, snow-white or shaded lavender. It was really enchanting. The *première danseuse* was young and pretty, with a charming slim figure, and was evidently a great favorite. At the right moment, when she had nearly danced her little feet off and her glossy hair out of curl, there arose a murmur in the audience and a procession appeared, bearing the floral tributes.

I thought I had seen tributes of important size before, but these were colossal, and their magnitude and number became absurd. It took a round dozen of men to carry them in and heave them upon the stage. There were easels ten feet high, stars of prodigious magnitude, wreaths that could hardly be lifted, with many other devices of graduated size, and there they stood, disposed in a towering semicircle, as a background to another sprightly *pas seul*, executed in the midst of the vociferous delight of the audience. Such occasions as these we indulge in rarely, for the fatigue of the late hours which are the custom here is apt to interfere with the next day's pleasure. Beginning at nine, one is usually kept out of bed till two.

One of the charms of Florence, as every one knows, is the beautiful variety of villas for which its situation is so favorable. Lying in a somewhat narrow valley, which it nearly fills, its lovely forest-like park extending itself along the river beyond, the wooded declivities of Fiesole are on the north and the more gradual slopes of the Oltrarno opposite. Little steam trams bustle out into the country, making it possible to have a very accessible

home beyond the city's noise, or if one desires a more perfect seclusion he may be as peacefully retired among gently rolling hills clothed with vines and olives as he pleases, and yet within easy driving distance.

Between two villas we visit, occupied by American friends, it is hard to choose. One has a location of the latter sort, and dreams away the days among the sweetest of peaceful outlooks over cultivated rounded hills. The rooms are large enough for spaciousness but not for empty vastness, and the house has been furnished gradually with beautiful and tasteful things found in Florence. A certain simplicity prevails; nowhere is there any overcrowding of furniture or overloading of ornament. It was the abode of a famous family, and the little chapel which forms a wing adds greatly to its attractiveness. On a certain *festa* of the Virgin Mary there is a service in it to which the neighboring *contadini* flock, and they are allowed to prepare it and deck it with flowers, according to their own ideas, which they do with the utmost reverence and care. This year a part of the preparation was to cover the whole pavement and the path outside for some distance with a carpet of rose petals.

The other villa of which I spoke is on the south side of Florence, and from the little tram which plies below it you may walk up easily in a few minutes. It is where the first hills rise toward the heights of Fiesole, and the suburbs of San Gervasio and Maiano lie along the heights. This villa also must have had a history, though the details of it, I believe, are not known, for it was a Medici house, and among the frescoes of its open court it is easy to recognize Lorenzo's ugly face. Against the wall is a fine old well, and through the hall beyond you may see out into a sunny garden. Beautiful views spread themselves before every window — the city, the

river, the mountains—and at the back a group of fine old cypresses broods over the lawn. There is a large open belvedere upon the roof, and in the four corners of it stand four great red jars, large enough to conceal the thieves of Ali Baba. To these the water is conveyed that is afterward distributed over the house. At the foot of the hill upon one side stands Vernon Lee's house, marked by its one great stone-pine, which stretches its circular shady parasol over the little enclosure.

Close by is one of the rarest domains near Florence, and it is for sale. On a commanding point of the hill stands its villa, upon a wide graveled terrace, solid and spacious, and I am told handsome and in excellent order within. From it stretch down to the lower ground on the west acres of shady woods and open glades, among which paths wind, to be sure, but otherwise the look of an almost untouched bit of nature is preserved. There one may make discoveries among the tall grass and tangled vines of some bit of ancient stonework, some fountain or well now overgrown, and there birds live and nest in a security undisturbed. And all this dream of beauty, with its comfort and accessibility, may be bought for twenty-five thousand dollars. When one thinks of a prosaic city house, with a few feet of clipped lawn, for which more than this is demanded, it seems almost incredible. Within sight of it is another little estate, also for sale, at less than half the price of the first, beguiling to a somewhat humbler aspiration and a shorter purse. This lies lower than its lordly neighbor, but still sufficiently elevated for a vista which is the perfection of tranquil loveliness, ending with the gently folding curves of hills that close in the distance. Besides the comfortable house, with its broad front, there is a little *podere* or farm, which is worked upon the tenant system which prevails here and which makes Tuscany the province of

all Italy where one would choose to live in the country, because there is less misery among the peasantry. The system is explained as follows, by some one who knows more than I do of it:

"The *mezzeria* or *metayer* system generally prevailing in Tuscany induces a patriarchal feeling between landlord and peasant which is very pleasant to see, but is not conducive to agricultural progress or a good thing for the landlord. He pays all the taxes to the government, which are enormous; he provides the house-rent free, and keeps it in repair; he buys the oxen, cows and horses, bearing half the loss if they die, and, of course, getting half the profit when they are sold. The peasant gives his labour, the landlord gives the land and the capital, and the proceeds are divided between them. In bad years the landlord advances corn to his peasants, which they repay, when they can, in wine, oil, beans, etc. Where there is a large family of young children the peasant sometimes accumulates a load of debt that cripples him for years; in rare instances the landlord turns him out at six months' notice, and puts another family on the farm; but, as a rule, the peasants remain for generations on the same property, and always talk of themselves as the *gente* [people] of their landlord."—Janet Ross, *Italian Sketches.*

About and beyond the villas I have mentioned lie endless possibilities for driving or rambling, for it is a region well nigh inexhaustible. One such excursion we took after having arranged it telescopically, so to speak, as our eyes ranged over the surrounding country from the top of the Palazzo Vecchio tower one morning. As we leaned upon the parapet of that commanding summit two castles that had long tantalized us in their green distance seemed to beckon us irresistibly and we began to talk to the custodian about them. Soon we had made our

plans and warmed to excitement in the spirit of adventure and later we carried them through successfully.

We began by taking the tram up to Fiesole in the afternoon, carrying provision with us for a meal *al fresco*. Arrived at the piazza where it sits securely in its saddle upon the hill, looking down on either side to valleys below, we made our escape as quickly as possible from the vendors of straw fans who project themselves upon all newcomers, and directed our steps westward, along the spine of the ridge. Beyond the confines of the village we came out upon scattered trees not yielding much shade, and thence to slopes covered with low-growing shrubs—an almost wild bit of country with farmhouses at long distances apart.

On reaching the first of our two castles, Poggio Castello, we found it inhospitable, for a printed notice warned trespassers away, so we could only circle round it and admire its dark solidity and the tall pines that profiled themselves against its gray walls and battlements. A restless wind played about it which suggested its being cool and comfortable when the warmth of summer set in, for Florence is said to become almost unbearably hot from July to September. At this place the descent began and we strolled downwards, seating ourselves now and then to look at the valley spread out before us and recognize the different clusters of roofs between the trees; so we approached at last our second castle, first passing the little church and the handful of buildings that lie below its walls.

Vincigliata is a sort of phœnix, which rose from its ashes about forty years ago. It had had a long and varied history as tumultuous as the times in which it existed, ending at last in its complete demolishment. How long it remained a mere heap of ruins I do not know, but at last it was purchased by an American, Mr.

Leader, with the idea of rebuilding it. It seemed a gigantic undertaking. The outline of the exterior was hardly traceable and all that remained standing was a fragment of wall which had formed part of the principal tower. It is said that, given a single bone, Mr. Agassiz could reconstruct a whole primeval fish, and perhaps in like manner archæologists can project a whole building from the most insignificant remnant.

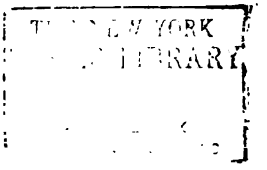
At all events, whatever secrets archæology and history yielded up, Vincigliata took shape again, its walls and towers, its battlements and fortifications became tangible, cypresses grew up about it and took on the look of age, and with the completion of the exterior the interior was not neglected. Old armor and weapons hang upon the walls, relics of antiquity are collected everywhere, and much modern reproduction helps it out. Decades ago wealth could command much more than it can to-day, when every corner of Italy has been ransacked for such things, and the treasures of carved marble and stone one comes upon here are not now to be found. We lingered fascinated by the mediæval kitchen with its interesting contrivances, its cavernous recesses, and its huge copper vessels; examples of majolica in a row just above our heads lent a glowing band of color to the dusky apartment, for when showers of arrows were liable to enter at the windows light had perforce to be curtailed. In the courtyard a row of marble tablets in the wall commemorated the reception of many parties of titled visitors, and certain rooms were furnished to receive the family when they wished to stay there, a thing which the custodian says does not happen now. It is open on Sundays and Thursdays to those who bring the required permit, and although it was neither of those days we dared to ring at the postern, confiding in the good nature of the custodian (who of course gains

some profit from visitors) and were not refused admittance.

When we had climbed to the top of the tower and peered fearfully into the black depths of an *oubliette* which afforded heartfelt satisfaction to the youngest member of our trio, we took leave of Vincigliata and proceeding a little beyond its boundaries chose a favorable situation for our out-of-door feast, which of course was more or less frugal in its elements as we had been obliged to carry it with us during our long ramble. On our travels we never waste the smallest remainder of these repasts, however. In America what would be the surprise and disdain of a passer-by to whom you offered a few mouthfuls of food, but here there is always some one to whom you may proffer it, sure of a smile and a ready acceptance. Such an one we encountered soon after our repast as we walked on, a ruddy-faced man a little past middle age, trudging homeward from his labor on the roads, his clothes powdered with the dust of the light stone used. He had a good, intelligent face and a cheerful expression, and accepted our small offering with an acknowledgment so pleasant and at the same time so self-respecting that he put us quite at our ease, and left us wishing it had been much larger.

Passing some delightful villas and gardens as we neared the foot of the hills, and reluctantly leaving unexplored the path that would have taken us aside to Settignano, that alluring little nest, we reached the group of houses at the terminus of the tram, whose infrequent trips seemed to be supplemented by a light cart which stood by the roadside and whose proprietor offered to set us down inside the barriers of Florence for a sum that but slightly exceeded the tram fare. We disguised our surprise and joyfully accepted, and having the little vehicle to ourselves jogged home in the utmost comfort and

Fiesole. A Hillside Villa.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good humor, enjoying the sweet fields and hedgerows and the ever new beauty of the delicious valley in the oncoming twilight.

At the barriers we bargained with our handsome *vetturino* for an extension of the drive—could he not take us across the city and set us down at Doney's? For we had concluded that a luxurious, nay almost dissipated climax to our day of pleasure would be to have ices and confectionery upon a little table outside that celebrated *caffè*. He agreed at once and volunteered to leave any extra compensation to the generosity of the Signore. Artful being! how well he understood the softening effect of such confidence! How could we do less after this than to part leaving him with a satisfied smile and a cheery tone in the voice that wished us good night?

The preparations for Easter are going on. All the pictures in the churches are covered, many windows are darkened, and even the figures of Christ on the small crucifixes have little bits of purple cloth fastened over them. Between Thursday and Sunday no bells will be rung, but at noon on Sunday all the bells of Florence will resound at once. On Holy Thursday, after the manner of good Roman Catholics, we visited churches to see the various representations of the Holy Sepulchre prepared in each one. To do your duty properly on that occasion you must go to seven; we overdid ours and, first and last, visited ten; and yet when all was over we were cruelly informed that we had omitted the one we should have seen above all others — that of San Giovannino. There is of course a wide choice as there are eighty important churches in Florence, besides I know not how many smaller ones. For the representation of the sepulchre a chapel in the church is chosen, decorated with flowers and greenery, and lighted by

scores of candles, from the height of a taper to that of many feet.

As you enter some churches the fragrance of fresh blossoms meets you; in others the flowers are mostly of paper fastened carefully upon stems of real green leaves, but everywhere a great feature is the pots of sprouting wheat. These are prepared eight days beforehand and placed in a cellar or other nearly dark place, so that the grain as it sprouts and seeks the light shall remain white. It grows to a length of six or eight inches, part of it drooping over the edges so that the outside of the pot is nearly concealed, and numbers of these pots are placed among the other plants and arranged as borders upon the floor. In some churches the flowers, plants and burning tapers form the total preparation, but they all vary in the arrangement of their effects. In the Misericordia, the most interesting one we saw, the church was hung with black and there was no light excepting what came from the altar of the sepulchre. A life-size figure of the dead Christ lay there, terribly real, and covered with wounds ghastly in their verisimilitude and crimson with streaming or coagulated blood. A silent crowd coming and going filled the church. Women and children pressed up to kiss the body and babies were raised in their mothers' arms that they might touch their lips to each wound separately.

Above the bier, and appearing everywhere among the flowers and lights, were the emblems of the Passion — the crown of thorns, the nails, the sponge, the sword, the dice, the red robe, the ladder, the hand which buffeted, the pillar to which He was bound, and the cock that reminded Peter. The people stream from one church to another to pray at as many as they can during the day. The parishes, of course, differ much in the amount and cost of the decoration which they can afford. For

example, San Giovannino, the church we failed to see, belongs to a rich parish whose wealthy inhabitants send such masses of exquisite hot-house flowers that there is said to be nothing like it in Florence. However, there is an artificiality about this which one regards as hardly more than curious. The true spirit of the thing is to be found in some little village where the rural population, full of sincere feeling and unquestioning faith, deck the sepulchre with field flowers and the simple offerings they are able to bring, and something like this we saw in the little village of Grassina, whither we went to see a procession which takes place at this season yearly.

Under the guidance of the organizer of the expedition we carried our supper with us, and started upon our hour's drive out into the country late in the afternoon. The sun was near the horizon when we entered the long street of the little village and all the population was abroad, together with many visitors who had come on foot or in vehicles of every description to be present at the ceremonies. Booths were set up on either side of the way for the sale of sweet-cakes and other eatables and we stopped to purchase some wafers special to the occasion. The thrifty dealer, noting the fact that we were foreigners, gave us less than half the quantity the same money would have purchased if offered by a native, but when we had tasted the cakes we were satisfied with the quantity, as they were strong of anise, a flavor which they here like carried to a point far beyond what we find pleasant.

Participants in the procession were collecting, and ever and anon a knight with pasteboard helmet and long rose-colored or blue cotton cloak came pricking by, hastening to the rendezvous. The church stood a little above the village on the long, gradual slope of a hill, and we mounted to it and afterwards chose a position a

little above it where was a stone-terraced garden, giving us a position overhanging the road by which the procession would approach, so that no group of village lads could cut off our view at the last moment. Here, upon a carpet of grass next a border of blue iris, we seated ourselves to enjoy the sunset and our supper while waiting. Placed as we were we overlooked the little basin-like valley; the village lay at the bottom, and the grass-covered hills curved away and upward from it on every side. The sun, almost disappearing over the rim, sent down long golden shafts, accenting the shadows on one side, while it glorified every growing thing on the other. The tufts of grass, the clumps of shaggy bushes, gilded in its rays, seemed to round themselves to more harmonious mouldings, and the waved outline of the hills above was almost fluent against the pale blue of the sky.

Softly but quickly the changes of light take place at this hour; very soon the sun had dipped, but it was not till twilight was upon us that the head of the procession turned the corner of the church and began to mount the slope in our direction. Leading it were several musicians playing dirges and requiems, whose lingering measures floated out upon the air of the little pastoral valley with a curiously mournful effect. Following the musicians were the Roman knights whom we had met singly earlier in the afternoon. They were more impressive now; pasteboard and cotton turned to steel and velvet in the half light, illuminated by the flare of the torches, and the dignity with which they sat their chargers was all that could be required of them. Then came a number of little boys bearing the emblems of the Passion, and following them the Apostles, clothed in loose robes and turban-like headgear of white. They preceded a bier bearing upon it the dead Christ, and as it came all the

peasantry gathered upon either side of the path, dropped to their knees and remained with bared heads till it had passed them. After this appeared a troop of little girls in white frocks and black sashes, their rosy faces filled with the seriousness of the occasion and the importance of their share in it, and after them paced the older girls, also in white and with white veils. Very charming and virginal they looked, in spite of a slight self-consciousness in the air of some of them, and behind them towered the Queen of Heaven, carried upright under a swaying canopy managed with some difficulty upon the steepness of the hillside. A band of older women walked behind, dressed in deep black, and the procession closed with a large number of people in every-day dress, representing the populace sure to be present upon all public occasions.

Some halts and hesitations gave us the opportunity we wished, to examine details of emblems and costume, and to note the sincerity and gravity with which the whole ceremony was regarded by both participants and spectators. Then the cortège slowly withdrew and gradually became a long, undulating line, marked by the luminous dots of its torches, twinkling and dipping as it followed the irregularities of the path where it mounted and dropped among the folds of the hills. Long we gazed after it and then reluctantly left our garden perch to return to the village, mount our carriage again and drive back through the light of stars, whose broken reflections we watched in the ripples of the Arno as we followed its banks toward Florence.

In the afternoon of Holy Thursday there is a great emblematical ceremony at the cathedral, the washing of feet. We went early to secure favorable places, but as the high altar is surrounded by a screen of glass in heavy panels, it is not easy to find them. After we had waited for a while a procession came slowly up the church, and

from it twelve old men from the almshouse, dressed in long white robes and with their heads bound round with white, filed into the chancel and sat upon a high settle covered with brocade, before which was a foot-rest. The space around was filled with priests and choristers, and presently the archbishop mounted his throne. Then, as the ceremony went on, there was much dressing and undressing of the feeble old archbishop, almost buried under his costly robes. They changed his habiliments, they put on and off the mitre, they gave and took away the crosier; but at length he slowly descended the steps of the throne and proceeded toward the beggars, whose shoes and stockings were removed by this time. A great silver basin was presented, each old fellow's heels rested in the basin in turn, while a little water was poured on them and a slight drying with a towel followed, after which the great dignitary bent forward as if to kiss the feet; but this was done symbolically, as on the stage.

Not so very long ago, before the unification of Italy, King Carlo Alberto used also to perform a ceremony something like this, but more agreeable. Twelve little boys, up to the age of twelve years, the prettiest that could be found among the noble families of Italy, were taken to the palace, the King washed their feet and afterward they remained to breakfast with him. He gave to each a costume of velvet and a silver knife, fork and spoon. But the most remarkable result of this event was that none of the children so honored was subject later to capital punishment, no matter what crime he might commit when grown up—imprisonment, if necessary, but not execution.

All day long on Holy Thursday as you go from church to church you see for sale outside each one numbers of rods bound spirally with colored paper. These have to do with a service which takes place about sun-

down. At that time we repaired to Santa Maria Novella and edged our way slowly through the thousands of people already assembled till we reached the lighted sepulchre, or rather stood within sight of it on some steps which raised us above the surging crowd, for it never remains stationary but sways and moves perpetually. Out of sight, the choir chanted the penitential psalms, with intervals between. Just as the singers are finishing the last one a noise suddenly begins, and in a moment swells to a thunderous volume of sound. This is the flagellation, and it lasts a few moments only, till the rods with which the people are supplied have been broken, as they furiously beat the stone floor, the steps, the columns—anything nearest them. Originally perhaps there was a solemnity to this observance, but now it appears to be mostly confined to the children. I did not see any grown people assisting at the beating.

On Good Friday at noon there is a famous musical service at the same great church, called "The Three Hours of Agony," in commemoration of Christ's suffering on the cross. For these three hours singing and exhortation alternate. The church is darkened and the high altar concealed by a representation of Calvary as large as the scenery of a theatre, with life-size figures of the people standing about the cross. We stayed only about an hour, for the crowd was so great that we could not get near enough to hear the exposition of the priest, and we found that there were twenty minutes of preaching to five of music. This virtually closed those ceremonials in Holy Week which were of any note. It is not now as it once was. "As black is to white, so is the Holy Week of to-day to that of Pio Nono's time," said an Italian friend to whom we ventured to intimate that we had looked for a little more pomp and circumstance in its observance.

DRIVING THROUGH TUSCANY

O silent walls that once with chants resounded,
Girt with your mournful cypresses and yews,
Do ye in prone forgetfulness but slumber,
Or on your sad decay, desponding muse?

Ashes to ashes! So shall yours return
To those of this gray soil, or else be cast
To the harsh winds that nightly beat upon
And long to rend and level ye at last.

T. M. B. *A Tuscan Monastery.*

AT Siena good fortune in weather seemed to desert us, and we began almost to despair of carrying out our cherished plan of driving to Monte Oliveto and beyond. Two days we waited anxiously while it poured continuously, our good hosts, full of kindness and solicitude, watching the clouds with us, in the meanwhile helping us to make a provisional arrangement with one Antonio Gracci, the owner of a pair of stout horses and a comfortable carriage. Summoned to an audience, that proprietor appeared, and after a preliminary skirmish with our hostess in the hall, during which she endeavored to discourage his overcharging us, we had an interview in the little salon. You are not to

suppose that this was a simple inquiry as to terms and a direct reply, with the whole affair, bald and unexciting, over in three minutes—nothing of the sort. The *padrone* having settled himself solidly upon one chair, I should have leaned indifferently back in another, while we discussed terms. But I am comparatively new to these affairs and prone to become too early heated in discussion, so that I am conscious now of having sat much too far forward upon the edge of my chair and of having allowed matters to come to a focus too rapidly. He, having proposed a price, I gazed at him with consternation depicted upon my countenance and suggested another. He feigned despair and resorted to transparently flimsy pretexts for his overcharge, while I triumphantly exposed them. We both talked animatedly, and I must modestly chronicle my own subsequent surprise at the gift of tongues which seemed to descend upon me on this occasion. My halting Italian appeared to clear itself up for the encounter and I became almost voluble. We ended amicably, I paying for the two days more than I had intended to, of course, but not dissatisfied, since Antonio is known to have horses strong and reliable for a long journey, which is not the case at all the stables in Siena.

Fortunately for us, in the night the weather changed, so that in the morning our chariot with its two good, fat horses and a fresh-faced young driver, drew up at the door about nine, and our light luggage being packed into it we established ourselves in great comfort. We like a youthful driver, for at that age they are not apt to domineer, but are modest and submissive and willing to take suggestions. Our cordial hosts waved their hands to us till we were out of sight, and we set off in high spirits. The roads were perfect in spite of the long rain, early flowers were sprinkled along each side of the way and

the vines were beginning to come into leaf. There were patches of snow on the mountains here and there still, and the air was cool and bracing. We trotted on to the cheerful accompaniment of our jingling bells, and cast many long looks backward as our dear little Siena made tender adieu to us, showing us a different aspect at the summit of each hill and finally melting into a thin fringe of slender points and towers up against the horizon.

From the valley of the Arbia we made a long, gradual ascent to the monastery of Monte Oliveto, perched on a sort of mountainous promontory among rugged ravines, with an outlook over miles upon miles of plains and ridges; a great silent edifice of purplish red brick, which once housed nearly three hundred monks but now shelters only four, with two students and two servants. It has been suppressed since Napoleon's day and now belongs to the government. To visit it you must go to the authorities in Siena and get a permit, which you send on by post ten days beforehand to announce when you may be expected, since you are warned that otherwise there would be nothing to eat. We entered the enclosure through a great battlemented gateway which raises itself above rows of sombre, pointed cypresses, and in a few minutes reached the entrance. We were received by one of the two servants and ushered into the cloisters, where presently the father highest in authority, Don Giuseppe Fabbri, came to speak to us, in his long cream-white robes, a most picturesque figure. He asked us how long we wished to remain, ordered a younger priest to show us over the building, and left us. We first studied the cloisters which Signorelli and Sodoma have lined with scenes from the life of St. Bernardo, who in the fourteenth century came to this lonely infertile region to begin his monastic life. The miracles which attended his career are delightfully portrayed by these two great

masters, many of them such innocent and childlike little miracles that one smiles perforce, as, for example, where a brother engaged in carpentering work lets an iron tool fall into the water, and St. Bernardo's holy power causes it to float to the surface again within reach of his hand. Such smooth, smiling, round-faced brothers, such clear, light colors, such fair, green gardens as are depicted; it is wonderful to think that the centuries have passed over these lovely frescoes and withered them so little.

After a tour of exploration to those parts of the monastery that are shown, and a luncheon served to us in the refectory, we were taken upstairs through long, empty, resounding corridors to our rooms. We passed rows of doors to cells of monks long gone, and at last reached the place assigned to us, a sort of little suite, which I fancy must have been intended for a higher church dignitary. The salon had a groined ceiling elaborately frescoed; opening from it in succession were two bedrooms, each with a narrow iron bed, a chair and a table, and at the end a bit of a dressing-room with the most primitive of bathing appliances. These cells were guiltless of the vanity of mirrors, and one must dress by imagination; but there was a Madonna over the head of each bed and a crucifix at one side, with a vase for holy water below it.

We spent the afternoon taking a long walk around and beyond the monastery and getting views from many points of vantage. A still higher ridge rises above this one, and crowning it is Chiusuri, one of the tiny Italian hill villages that one wonders over. It would be easier to guess why it was originally perched upon this height—and indeed it was of importance in its day—than what keeps it still in existence. Incredibly little as the peasantry must be able to live on, one can hardly see how or where that little is wrung from this soil. It caps

the very summit of the ridge; steep earthen cliffs and ravines fall away from it, composed of a soil that has been the despair of the husbandman for its chalky, shifting quality. St. Bernardo made it his life-work to reclaim parts of it and render it fit for the support of human life, but labor can never have compelled much of a return, and season after season avalanches of gray mud precipitated themselves upon vineyards and olive plantations, sometimes completely destroying them.

At seven o'clock we repaired again to the refectory, and there at one end of the long table our meal was served to us dimly lighted by an old Roman lamp. But indeed we would have wished no brighter light; a partial obscurity suited far better the age in which we were living, and who knows but this flickering lamp may have served here for centuries. I talked to our waiter and found him very communicative. I asked if he were not a little lonely here, and he acknowledged feelingly that he was, that it was desolate and he had no one to speak to. The other seven inmates, including the cook, were all in holy orders, he being the only lay-man. He held that the wind always howled round the old building as it did that night; and perhaps ghosts walk — there is vast space and emptiness enough for anything. I could not help feeling that the padres must still harbor resentful feelings toward intruding women who come to invade a retreat once closed against their objectionable sex, but to my surprise when the last course, of small sour raisins and tough cheese, was served, Don Giuseppe came in, seated himself at the table with us and affably entered into conversation. I proffered various questions about the establishment and he politely explained, so that we sat quite a little while over our slender dessert.

It seems that ordinary visitors to the monastery are

Monte Oliveto. Chiusuri.

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not allowed to remain more than two days. Each one pays five *lire* a day, no more, no less. Of course, one may make a donation to the establishment, but it is not asked or hinted for. On special application it is possible to stay several weeks, and Don Fabbri was proud of an English scholar who, he told us, came every year, to make an extended stay, for the purpose of studying in the great library. I must confess that the food is such as to suggest mortification of the flesh, and while one may easily find enough to satisfy one's hunger at dinner-time, breakfast is not very sustaining. At that time coffee of an undrinkable kind is served with *crostini*,— that is, fragments of the unsalted bread of the country dried in the oven to a fossil-like hardness. No butter is offered at any meal and the water has a strong earthy flavor, possibly harmless but certainly unpleasant. The wine is good.

In our comings and goings we now and then encountered Andrea, our young *vetturino*, hanging about the monastery yards and stables with an air of such settled melancholy as awakened our sympathy. He, as well as the *cameriere*, appeared to find no companionship and to experience a depression hard to endure. It was therefore with an air of cheerful alacrity that he prepared to resume the journey on the second morning, and having bidden Don Fabbri a cordial farewell we turned our faces eastward, meaning to drive through San Quirico and Pienza to Montepulciano, San Quirico being a convenient stopping-place for luncheon, besides being in itself interesting. After descending from the altitude of Monte Oliveto one travels through a country of valleys and low hills, smooth with cultivation, among which, at noon, one reaches San Quirico.

At the sign of "The Two Rabbits" our chariot drew up and we had an interview with the fat landlady,

who promised to prepare *colazione* while we went to visit the old Chigi garden, and we started at once in search of the key. To live in a castle or *palazzo* in Tuscany where there is no space for a garden is not necessarily to be deprived of one, only to be separated from it by a short distance, and so when the key had been given us we proceeded to an entrance in a high gray wall, and when it had grated in the lock and the ancient gates had swung back on their hinges, we beheld the garden indeed, a tranquil green wilderness, but no villa, only a slender stone tower that sprang up at one side from a carpet of untrodden meadow-grass, and beyond, whispering ilex woods mounting an irregular slope which had once been carefully tended terraces.

Never could this lovely solitude have been so beautiful in its prime as it is in its decay. We were at liberty to loiter here as long as we liked and we rustled across the field-flowers and bending grass-blades to the shade of glossy deep-green leafage that sheltered a moss-grown stone bench. This bench interested us from its quaint form. It was circular, and the slim column around which it turned ended in a Janus-like head whose disintegrated features bore the appearance of having been originally carved in sugar and then partly melted away by rain. A little higher there was a beautiful old stone table with seats on opposite sides. It yielded a possibility of places for four, and yet it suggested harboring only two; not two lovers, who would have chosen the circular bench, but two friends, who, content to be opposite each other instead of side by side, might muse and talk, leaning idly on the stone slab between them, while from the roof of their cool retreat only an occasional flicker of sunlight dropped through to touch them. The more open parts of the garden were commanded by the upper windows of a line of houses looking almost as old as the wall they

peeped over, so that on a *festa*, when the nobility in gala array disported themselves upon the terraces, excellent opportunity for enjoying the spectacle must have been afforded to the humbler townsfolk. On our return to the inn the old *padrona*, who was also cook, came upstairs and hovered about, to see how we liked our *pranzo*, and wrung her hands when she observed how little soup we took.

At this meal we had a new dish, small dark-red artichokes, eaten raw, dipped in olive oil and salt. The young woman who waited at table instructed us how to prepare them and encouraged us in our efforts to appreciate them. In the course of conversation we told her that we were from America, and she exclaimed that she longed to go to that country. We told her that she would hardly find anywhere in the world a fairer land than her own, but she only shook her head and repeated: "Ah! you say that because you are foreigners. I do not value it so much. I was born in San Quirico, but I don't like Italy. It is my dream to go to America." And indeed it seemed possible that her life at "The Two Rabbits" might lack the elements of novelty and variety. The emptiness of such inns as these ever and anon surprises us afresh. It is as though they were kept open for us alone. Not a sound comes from the different apartments, not a chair but ours is occupied in the dining-room.

It had rained during luncheon, and while we waited for it to cease we leaned from the window and looked down into the little street where the gray of the sky seemed to be reflected in the paving-stones, which glistened silvery clean and sent tinkling drops into tiny clear pools between their uneven edges. I suppose there is hardly an inhabitant of San Quirico who does not know every other; certainly the occasional passers-by greeted

the inhabitants of the opposite house, or stood a few moments, regardless of the rain, to chat together. How weighty may the affairs of such a tiny town be? But then human interest never lacks where even two or three human beings are gathered together, and who knows what thrilling emotional dramas may be enacted in San Quirico? At length the last slow drops had ceased and our carriage came to the door.

Our departure was an event participated in by a crowd that seemed to have suddenly collected as by magic, and when our artist decided to walk a short distance guided by the driver in order to take a photograph of a little church near by, the fact seemed to be generally communicated in a twinkling and the street filled from wall to wall with the populace of San Quirico, marching after her to watch the operation. After it was over they respectfully fell apart and allowed her to pass back, filling up again solidly behind her and streaming after her to the carriage. Here I incautiously gave the driver directions aloud to go to another church, and we started off at a brisk trot. This was too much for the younger portion of the male population, who broke into hot pursuit and caught up with us promptly at the next sanctuary!

The last look at San Quirico was one of the pictures that a moment seems to stamp upon the memory — a remembrance that winds itself about the heart to carry always. It was as we paused after having passed out of its heavy gateway — the gate itself, with its tower and its diminishing line of walls and roofs, the single cypress that stood up silhouetted against the sky, and the beautiful pair of slow-moving oxen issuing from its arch, drawing their primitive cart and guided by a curly-locked youth, who enjoyed our appreciative glances at his charges.

Through the same quiet country as in the morning, we drove to Pienza and descended from the carriage in

Pienza. The Gateway.

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its empty, wind-swept little piazza, that somehow left with me the most melancholy impression that I ever received from a town in Italy. Perhaps it was partly the gray afternoon and the bleak gusts that fitfully whistled through it and seemed to buffet the twin columns of its beautiful fountain, but the inhabitants looked pinched, and poverty clings about the old buildings that were once so sumptuous and are now so forsaken and so fast crumbling away, while grass and weeds sprout from the walls, and not a footfall echoes in the solitude of the once magnificent courts. Nay, there was one — in that of a *palazzo* into which we strayed, a purblind old custodian lay in ambush, and my conscience smites me now that I thoughtlessly shook my head and refused his offer to show me the interior, when I should have given him the coveted fee and been grateful that I had been allowed the opportunity to yield him that small solace.

Pope Pius II expended great riches to render this, his tiny native town, renamed for him, magnificent, and it must have been so in his day. One can fancy the pageants in the little streets, and the importance and bustle when the piazza with its four noble buildings was filled with the papal court. I believe the mitre of the great Æneas Silvius Piccolomini still rests in the cathedral, with its precious jewels glittering coldly in almost undisturbed seclusion. It is to be hoped that the mighty prelate cannot now look down to see the sad abandonment of the place he loved, lest it should even somewhat embitter Paradise. One cannot but wish him peace and satisfaction, for first as a scholar and wit and later as a devoted and single-minded pontiff, he commands one's respect. His was a many-sided character, and to the lover of nature his passionate attachment to its aspects renders him doubly sympathetic. Toward the close of his life, when he could no longer walk, he had himself

carried on a litter to the different points which commanded the views that he loved, and tears filled his eyes as he gazed upon the beauty which ravished his heart, and yet which he knew would soon fade forever from his vision.

From Pienza it was but two hours more, climbing higher and higher, to reach Montepulciano, where, even more than Siena, it "sits and towers" upon its isolated mountain pedestal. And even when we had entered its gates and drawn up before the Albergo Marzocco at the foot of its lion-surmounted column, we did not cease ascending, for the inn had many floors, and we were bent on securing its finest outlook. We chose windows that looked over half Tuscany as it seemed to us, where we could discern many a little town perched upon neighboring hills, with mile after mile of fertile tilled ground on the plain below, and beyond all a circle of mountains. Three lakes also we could count from our windows, and with such a wide horizon it was pleasure enough to sit there and watch the play of sun and cloud over it for that evening. Our rooms were quiet and retired. We had been given an unrestricted choice, and on our journey of exploration we had seen a little dining-room in one of those unexpected locations not uncommon here. This we fastened upon at once and declared we must be served in. A round table not too large stood in the centre and its glass doors opened upon a *terrazzo*, or broad upper veranda, that pleased us much. It inspired us to order dinner at once, but later, when we returned to eat it, the weather had turned too cool for the *terrazzo*, and a cheerful little blaze leaped upon the open hearth, and our landlady's daughter, a comely, black-eyed girl, waited upon us. She took a kindly interest in our likings and dislikings, praised this dish and was doubtful of that, and when we approved the celebrated vintage

of Montepulciano, went to fetch some wine which she declared to be older and better. She lingered beside us at the window after dinner was over, to chat, though modestly declaring her conduct in so doing to be too presuming; but when she had, on further encouragement from us, talked animatedly for a while, she suddenly checked herself with the remark:—

"The Signorina," indicating the youngest member of our trio, "thinks a great deal. She thinks more than she talks, does she not?"

I assented to her observation.

"Ah!" she said, lightly sighing, "I am not serious myself, but I always admire serious people."

In the morning the sun shone brightly and only enough soft white masses and streaming ribbons of cloud were left from the heavy sky of the day before to make the blue vault overhead perfect. We dawdled over our coffee, took an interest in the garden of the convent school opposite, and breakfasted as well upon the delicious view spread out before us in all the freshness of its recent rain-bath. Even the asperity of the heraldic lion on the column outside our entrance was softened by the beauty of the morning, and we thought he glanced at us indulgently as we wandered forth and began to mount the main street as it takes its upward course, following the irregular comb of the ridge on which Montepulciano is built. Fine old palaces line it, and each short cross-street leads out to the low parapet of the city wall and an enchanting view.

It is interesting to study the façades of these homes of old historic families, and we explored as far as we thought we might venture to, the *palazzo* of Poliziano, famous humanist and poet, which is however one of the least conspicuous. Passing for some distance beyond this *palazzo* one comes to a flight of stairs and makes the last

ascent to the Piazza Grande where stands the cathedral. There is an inexpressible charm to the whole progress and we gained a certain familiarity with it by making it frequently, even though our stay was short. Wandering breeze and open sunlight are the characteristics of this high-hung, hoary old square, with its rugged cathedral, its fine fountain and its noble palaces. The latter, once abodes of the proud and wealthy, are now, though still retaining their external impressiveness, evidently divided within for the use of various families much humbler in rank. Loth to leave the open air, we sat upon the broad steps of the cathedral, which are of the width of its whole front, and let our eyes travel over the mellow façade of the Palazzo Tarugi opposite, with its graceful corner *loggia* opening on the street, just outside of which and fashioned of the same warm-tinted stone, stands the fine fountain with its quaint symbolic beasts poised on the crossbeams surmounting its pair of pillars.

Before an open casement on the second story sat an old couple with gentle, placid faces, enjoying, as we were doing, the clear sunlight and the balmy air. Were they happy in the mild, uneventful evening of their days? They looked too frail to be often tempted forth into the town with its rugged streets and byways. What were their pleasures, what their musings, so limited and tranquil? Could wanderers, such as we, divine the simplicity of their lives, the narrow bounds within which they were probably content, the slender means that sufficed for their unambitious wants? For a long time no other human life appeared in the piazza, but then a figure of quite another type entered it and crossed toward the cathedral entrance. It was a priest, tall, erect, handsome, young in spite of his white hair, with a face which indicated a high degree of intelligence and a bearing which showed ease and polish. At the foot of the steps he met a man who

had meanwhile turned a near angle of the building, and stopped to speak with him. I could not overhear the interview, but by the rustic embarrassment of the second and the mischievous smiles of the priest it was easy to guess at the good-humored banter that was inaudible. It was a diverting and characteristic little scene and it ended in a playful grasp of the man's arm by the priest, who, as the other pulled awkwardly away, laughed jovially and in a tone loud enough to be overheard exclaimed, "Oh, come along, and let me convert you a little!"

There are delightful rambles about Montepulciano, and in the afternoon when shadows begin to grow long it is well to descend to San Biagio, the imposing church designed by Sangallo, and to sit on the great sweep of soft turf that stretches about it, thickly sprinkled with white daisies, and see opposite the colonnaded house of the famous architect and all the sweet country that spreads beyond, climbing up again to the eyrie of Montepulciano by a winding road partly shaded by arching trees, as the evening coolness comes on. In little towns like these one speaks to the rural people one meets in taking a walk, and they have so many pretty ways of returning salutations. "Good evening," we say. "Good evening to your ladyships in return," they reply. "A happy night—sweet rest to you!" And all with such a cordial courtesy.

The pleasure we had experienced in traveling by carriage induced us to continue our journey in the same way, and a conveyance was found in a stable close by to carry us on to Cortona. The morning was warm and sunny and we made the transit in much comfort, after which we lunched poorly in a little restaurant where importunate cats reminded us of their presence by painful clawings if we did not bestow a share of our food upon them with sufficient frequency. As the steep streets of

Cortona are ill calculated for driving, we obtained the services of a rather forbidding guide, but though at first our spirits were a little clouded by his uncongenial companionship, we soon forgot it in the delight of the pictures he conducted us to, and when we had looked at these and dismissed him we could stray at will wherever inclination suggested.

It was a wild afternoon, with a fitful wind coming in sudden gusts and a sky full of mighty billows of gray cloud. From the steep side of the mountain upon which the little town clings we could look down upon the plain which was misty purple in the weird light that seemed to rest upon everything. In the distance toward the south a bit of Lake Trasimeno lay in sight, with a perpendicular shaft of white light descending upon it, while about us all was blackness. I could not help thinking it all looked like a preparation for the end of the world. Highest and last of all above us lay the ruins of the *fortezza*. Climbing toward it we found an old man standing in the path, and on our asking him if we could be admitted he called to a girl who was tending a few goats not far off and bade her fetch the key and accompany us. She came running with it presently, a wild creature, almost as sylvan as her goats, and led us up. For all the chilly wind she seemed but half-clothed. Her scanty dark wool skirt came a little below her knees, beneath which her legs and feet were bare. A bit of drapery was drawn over her shoulders, and a kerchief knotted about her head confined her blowing hair.

The sombre bulk of the old castle was brightened by masses of golden wall-flower that hung from crevices and sprang from the tops of crumbling walls. I had never before seen it in the habitat from which it received its name, and its warm color and familiar sweetness brought a touch of warmth into the bleak surroundings.

Our goat-herd conducted us within the walls, and clambering lightly up the remains of the outer bastion showed us a favorable perch where we could rest and gaze out over the country spread below us. She told us the few facts she knew concerning the castle, and when we questioned her a little readily talked of herself. She was alone in the world, she said. The old man and his wife below were no relatives of hers but she lived with them and minded the goats. That was her life. She added that she was not strong, and touched her chest — the trouble was there. She was thirty years old now, but could not work hard. She had no one to love her and she loved no one — perhaps it was better so, for there was no pain of parting for her, "And when we love, Signora, we must suffer." She spoke gravely but not sorrowfully, and yet her solitariness touched one's heart, and we lingered with her and almost forgot the waning afternoon. When on parting I gave her her fee, divided in such a way that she might, if she were called on, hand over a small sum to her old master, but keep the larger for herself, she thanked us civilly, and yet appeared to set light store by the money, and ran from us toward her goats with a quick adieu when we had turned downward over the brow of the hill.

AREZZO.

"Over the roofs o' the lighted church I looked
A bow-shot to the street's end, north, away
Out of the Roman gate to the Roman road,
By the river, till I felt the Apennine,
And there would lie Arezzo." . . .

BROWNING. *The Ring and the Book.*

It was nearly seven when we reached the station of Arezzo, and as we descended from the train an aged

porter begged to be allowed to carry our handbags. They were not burdensome, but at his renewed solicitations we yielded them up to him, since the earning of the four cents appeared to be such a vital matter. He carried them across the station.

"We are going to the Inghilterra," said I.

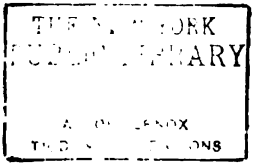
"Oh very well, you won't need a carriage to go there," he returned; "it is but a step, and I will go with you myself. It would take five minutes to get a carriage."

"But there are two larger pieces of luggage registered," said I, "quite too heavy for you."

He took the checks and hobbled off, presently reappearing with another old man. Number Two had the heavier bags on a large handcart, but the small ones were still borne by our first porter. I began to be amused and checked the inquiry as to why one porter could not easily carry the four bags on a handcart of that size, or half that size, for the matter of that. So we took up our line of march, forming a little procession, with the handcart leading.

We passed out of the station door, and behold, there were plenty of carriages, though our porter was unabashed before this proof of his misrepresentation. The drivers fairly yearned to secure us. They did not shout and vociferate as in America, but approached us with a confidential manner, a secret, furtive air. They made bids against one another for our patronage, and as we started away one cried, "You and *all* your luggage for one *lira!*" When we failed to accept this offer he groaned aloud and whipped his horse away, for there appeared to be no other passenger that night. We were aware that our old *facchino* had checkmated the cabmen, and it became evident that we were included in his victory, for it was not

Borgo. A Street.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one step, but a great many, to the hotel. I forgot to mention, by the way, that, as there had been a shower, we stopped just before leaving the station to put on our overshoes. This attracted universal attention, and some ten or twelve men in the station hastened up and with a simple and single-minded curiosity they took not the slightest pains to disguise formed a respectful semicircle round us and solemnly watched us draw them on. At last we reached the hotel and at the door our two porters had a misunderstanding, accompanied by some vivacious swearing. Neither, however, appeared to triumph, and they followed us upstairs, going from room to room with us as we inspected the various ones offered and made a choice. When we were established I inquired,—

"How much do you expect?"

"Only two *lire*, one apiece for us," the first responded cheerfully.

"That is too much," said I.

"Very well," he rejoined promptly; "one and a half."

We paid it, having derived sufficient entertainment from his *finesse* to amply repay us for a small outlay, and as he contentedly departed we agreed that we were strongly reminded of the old tale of the Irishman and the sedan-chair, to be adapted in our case as follows: "Drive up to the hotel for twenty cents, or walk up for thirty." Our already cheerful frame of mind was further promoted by finding no lack of comfort in this hostelry. Like many of those in the smaller places it bore a name of magnitude and importance, to wit—"Grand Hotel Royal of England, formerly The Golden Key." It afforded us spacious rooms, an excellent dinner, and good service, and we recked little of the rain which beat against our windows that evening, as we sat with our books be-

side a sociable little fire which chirped and crackled in a way to keep any traveler in spirits.

For so small a town, Arezzo enjoys the distinction of having given birth to an astonishing number of celebrities. Here the oft-quoted Mæcenas flourished, Petrarch, the bard of faithful lovers, first saw the light in number twenty-two of the Street of Gardens, as a long inscription upon its front informs the passer-by, but he has waited now some six hundred years for the monument which it is said the citizens of Arezzo fully intend to erect to him near this spot. Pietro Aretino, that foul-mouthed satirist and impassioned lover of beautiful sunsets, grew up here, and besides several well-known artists, Vasari, the biographer of artists, here came into the world. It will be easily seen therefore that Arezzo has abundant claims to consideration, and yet it failed to attract us as did the beautiful country that lies about and beyond it. Perhaps our minds were now too eagerly bent upon rambles in the mountains at whose very gate we stood, and we were impatient to traverse the wooing distances of the Val di Chiana, climb the heights and draw deep breaths among the lonely swelling chains of the Apennines.

The Apennines! there is something in the very name that lays a grasp on one and sets the imagination groping among the sensations and suggestions that stir at the mention of it. Are they mournful, those wide-stretching, often treeless and infertile ridges? Are they desolate, those wind-lashed clinging trees that grasp the steeps? Do they but frown, those cliffs and battlements of inflexible rock? I do not know. They seem to hold the key of every mood. They can meet intimately the spirit that is stricken, they can stimulate fortitude in the soul that is tried, they can clear the vision of eyes that are obscured, and in their hidden folds are quiet valleys

and the murmur of streams. And so Arezzo did not hold us long. We slipped from her gate and journeyed onward and upward.

BORGO SAN SEPOLCRO.

We started toward Borgo San Sepolcro at five o'clock in the afternoon, in the pigmy omnibus train, pulled gayly along by a droll little teapot of a locomotive. It was a very democratic company and there were no divisions into class compartments, but the whole car open, which is not common here. A man with Venetian glass toys for sale walked sociably about showing them to interested groups of *contadini*. Opposite us sat a sweet-faced young woman, evidently hardly able to travel. We fancied her as having been to a great city like Arezzo to consult the doctor, and now the young farmer-husband was taking her home to the mountains. It pleased us to see how tender he was of her, and how carefully he supported her with his arm and tried to keep her from feeling the jarring of the train. She had a smiling happy expression, and gave him glances of loving appreciation in return for his protecting care.

We made our way upward through narrow ascending valleys, the woods and hedgerows, the little farms and villages all looking so fresh and sparkling in the sunset light, as the rays were caught and reflected in the drops left hanging by a recent shower. In two hours we had reached Borgo. It was dark, and we sought the little Albergo Fiorentino with some misgivings. We lean upon our trusty Baedeker, and when there is a starred hotel in any town we feel secure, but when a bare mention in brackets is all that is accorded, it leaves a painful doubt in the mind and lands one at once among the uncertainties of exploration. When, however, things

turn out as well as they did in Borgo, one has a feeling of triumph. The smiling landlady took us through the dining-room to a large clean bedroom, of curiously irregular shape, to fit the crooked line of the street its boundaries followed, with many colored Scriptural prints on the walls and an abundance of furniture and ornament that suggested its being the only apartment of consequence in the house. In a short time a good supper was prepared and we had it by ourselves in the dining-room, which became exclusively ours upon our arrival, after which we went to bed, with great satisfaction in the comfort and neatness of our surroundings.

In the sunny morning we sallied forth to explore the town and see the Piero della Francesca frescoes. There was no disillusion in either one or the other and we felt more than repaid for our pilgrimage to the home of this great master, of such noble originality even in an age when genius unfolded itself everywhere throughout Italy. We sat long before his fresco of the Resurrection, which is the finest and most dignified representation of the Christ I have ever seen. Afterwards there was time to become acquainted with the outward aspect of his native town, as we strolled about, unmolested by guides or beggars. Although a long way from Rome, which somehow seems to claim the whole river, Borgo is in the upper valley of the Tiber, which instead of being a murky yellow flood, as it is when it passes through the Eternal City, is here a clear beautiful stream, winding through flowery meadows, with the peaks of the higher Apennines in sight above it. Lying in this valley, Borgo is flat, although its altitude is considerable. Its gray stone walls are in many places overgrown with vines and a bit of vineyard or olive grove often borders them on the inner side.

In a quiet garden-like piazza before the principal

church, where old men sat contentedly sunning themselves and babies played quietly and amicably, rises, on a tall pedestal, the statue of Piero. Opposite it stands the most important *palazzo* of the place, belonging to Count Collacchine, where we were allowed to enter and see the figure of the youthful Hercules painted by the great artist upon one of its walls. The house was silent and so was the respectful man-servant who showed us over it, and though everything was in perfect order we could not help wondering whether the Count found little slumberous Borgo attractive enough to keep him often within its walls for a length of time. In the main piazza of the town, round which at the roots of old stone edifices little shops clustered, stood a tall detached tower, solid and square, the Tower of Bertha, they told us. The entrance was closed, but on asking whether we might mount it we received ready permission. We loitered about for some minutes and then began to be much surprised at the important preparations being made for our ascension. A man with bright red hair and two able-bodied youths of darker complexion were making lanterns ready and girding themselves as though for an arduous undertaking. We looked at one another in some wonder. We had climbed many towers, often without a guide at all, never with more than one. We concluded curious travelers were so infrequent in Borgo that the largest possible number of fees was to be made out of us.

Presently the big door was unlocked, disclosing a seldom-used cobwebby interior, up whose stairs we began to toil. These solid steps, however, soon ended, and we then recognized the practical need of three guides. Gazing upward through the scantily lighted well of the interior, we discerned wide gaps, crazy-looking supports, and unsteady ladders of flimsy construction. Caution

counseled retreat, but ardor and curiosity urged advance. We faltered but a moment; there could be no real danger or the guides would not so willingly risk their own safety, and we proceeded. The lantern lighted us across black gaps of nothingness which we had to span, the dark youths tried to hold firm the rickety ladders, and all three encouraged us by word and gesture to persevere. They seemed to experience quite a lively satisfaction at getting us to the top uninjured and informed us that the last party who began the ascent had given out at the top of the stairs; indeed the Signore were the first ladies they had ever conveyed to the summit! We concluded when we had recovered our breath that the view was worth the risk, if risk there had been, and found the red-haired man an intelligent and willing informer. We scrutinized the mountain peaks, the distant villages, the nearer suburbs, and he was ready with anecdote and explanation upon them all. But in the end our closest attention centred itself upon the clustered houses directly below us.

I do not know whether the roofs of Italy have ever been greatly enlarged upon, but for charm and beckoning mystery and provoking conjecture what minor feature can equal them? The infinite variety of colors and shadings with which time has painted the old tiles, the absolute irregularity of line everywhere, the pots of flowering plants that peep from attic windows, the bird-cages that cling to the walls, the wild blossoming growths that spring from eaves and cracks, and the frequency of little unexpected roof-gardens, where, up beyond observation from below, much of the family life goes on,—all combine to create an impression of oneness and intimacy that strikes the foreigner, unaccustomed to a contact so immediate. The narrowness of the streets, with their inconsequent twists and turnings, brings the roofs to-

gether and crowds them into one focus, so that from a height they appear hardly divided by more than unimportant cracks; and seeing them thus, their warm, red, uneven surface seems to close down upon and hold together the collective life of the town, and make its existence as that of one large wide-spreading family.

A woman's head appears at a window and a merry voice casts a greeting across to a neighbor, a girl steps out among the potted plants in the roof-garden and examines their growth and their needs, a cat slips swiftly along the eaves and disappears noiselessly within a tiny open casement. The minutest evidence of life seems full of meaning—a sentence, a phrase suggests a history that might be warm with vivid interest if one could but seize the volume and fasten upon the page. Many an hour of happy idleness may one spend, leaning from the top of a tower like this and dreaming of the past or speculating upon the present of a tranquil, immutable little place such as Borgo San Sepolcro.

APRIL IN THE MARCHES

Quì dove arride i fortunati clivi
Perenne Aprile e l'aure molli odora
E ondeggian mèssi e placido d' olivi
Bosco s 'infiorìva. . . .

— CARDUCCI.

IT rained hard all the morning and had not abated at noon when we took the train for Ancona, to traverse the remainder of the way through the Umbrian Apennines and at the end of the day sweep down to the very shore of the Adriatic. Oh what tantalizing little towns did we not see upon the way! It well nigh tempted us to cast ourselves forth from the car windows in despair at being whirled past them. Hanging upon the sharpest ridges, or piled street over street on hills above us, these clusters of brownish stone walls rising out of the soil seemed more like growths of nature than habitations evoked by man. The compact mass is always presided over by its church, or rather by its churches, for however inconsiderable a place may be, there are many. In one hamlet, so small that it looked as though one could make the circuit of its walls on foot in fifteen minutes, we counted five in sight, and there is no variety of denomination — no disagreement

as to the true faith—they are all of the one mighty Roman sect, not as powerful as it was but ever present still.

As the afternoon wore on the rain stopped and though the sky was still black we left the train at Jesi to spend a few hours among its antiquities. Choosing one of the well-worn little carriages at the station (it is well to observe whether the horses have straight legs and the driver an intelligent face), we drove across the intervening space and mounted to the city walls, their irregular height showing deep red with the warm tones of old brick wet with recent rain. To say they were of brick instead of stone seems at first to lessen their importance, but after seeing that the Baths of Caracalla, the most prodigious and imposing ruins of Rome, are of brick yet nearly two thousand years old, one realizes that their indestructibility hardly falls behind that of the eternal rocks. Besides, the walls of Jesi are not now mere fortifications, but in the upper reaches of their surface display the most enchanting irregularity of line and projection. Windows have been cut at different heights, roofs crop up in varying altitudes, so that the wall itself seems thickly populated, every few feet illustrating the tastes and necessities of the various families who look down upon the passer-by like bank-swallows from their cliff. Now and then a massive round tower forms an oriel for this extended family mansion, whose united base sweeps outward in a fine curve toward the foundation.

It was Sunday, and all the world was taking advantage of the respite after the rain to walk abroad; and as usual there was complete division of the sexes. The girls and women strolled together arm in arm, in twos, threes, or even fours; the young men were in groups by themselves. The women, even when they are very well dressed, wear no hats unless they are distinctly of the upper class. What a saving in the expense of millinery!

The babies are swaddled tightly just as they were a thousand years ago, and can be handled as though they were unjointed wooden dolls. One is at first inclined to pity their discomfort but I never see one crying; indeed it is remarkable how seldom one hears Italian children cry, even when in the neighborhood of dozens.

The life of the place seemed to be all at the entrance of the town and just outside the walls, for the city had overflowed a little and there were buildings beyond the gates. Once inside and threading the narrow streets, it became a solemn, dark gray solitude. The damp stone walls took the color of the sky overhead, and the noise of our wheels upon the wet stones was for some time the only sound. At the left of one side-street a graceful bronze wreath on the second story encircled the name of Pergolese and brought singing to the ear the exquisite simplicity of his eighteenth century music. What a pleasant custom, this of commemorating the former dwelling-places of the great who are gone! It keeps something of their living presence fresh in the minds of those who tread the same places in these later days. Coming out just after this upon the main piazza, we found ourselves face to face with a marble tablet, upon which was another inscription even more interesting. Translated, it read something as follows:—

> "*In this place, once the seat of the Holy Inquisition, to-day a hall of secular study— to Giordano Bruno, apostle of liberal thought, victim of priestly tyranny, the citizens of this municipality place this memorial.*"

It was surprising to see the publicity of this sentiment in a little town in the interior of a country still stanchly Roman Catholic in its belief.

Jesi. The City Wall.

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We had been advised to see Jesi for its beautiful old palaces, and coming upon an unusually extensive one, through whose broad arched entrance we could see a flowery garden, we alighted and asked if we might step inside. Just within the arch was the contrast so often to be met in these places, the emerging from a shadowed street to light, air, fragrant flower-beds, and a widely extended view from a noble terrace, looking beyond the city walls. A courteous elderly man and woman, evidently old family servants, responsible and intelligent, made us welcome in the garden and told us of the great days the palace had seen in the past. We thought its present state of mellow decay, the varied tints of its walls, the crumbling, mossy stone of its balustrades, was doubtless more picturesque, but we listened sympathetically as the woman, in a singularly sweet voice, wistfully regretted that the present members of the family now no longer came to stop in Jesi; when they visited the neighborhood it was to stay at a villa outside in the country; indeed part of the palace was even let to tenants, and she glanced up at the exterior of it, which enclosed the garden excepting toward the terrace, not squarely but in a finely-curved ellipse. She gathered sweet old-fashioned flowers for us as she talked, and made them into nosegays which she presented to each of us as we came away, adding a pleasant wish that we might come again to Jesi, a sentiment which we shared with her, experiencing a warmth of feeling in regard to it that she could hardly know.

ANCONA AND LORETO.

Ancona, though one is reluctant to confess it of any place in Italy, was somewhat disappointing. Its situation is beautiful, its two bold promontories sweep finely out

into the Adriatic, Trajan's triumphal arch faces the sea impressively, and yet what interested us most was the tiny Crivelli Madonna in the Museum, like a miniature for size and perfection of finish. We studied it long and admired its exquisite enamel-like color yet concluded not to spend a second night in Ancona but to take advantage of the bright afternoon to drive on the eighteen miles to Loreto, that sacred abode of the Virgin and resort of all pious pilgrims.

Rolling hills begin to swell away almost from the brink of the Adriatic, and our spirits rose with every rod of the first gentle ascent. Everything was so placid and lovely—the turquoise blue of the sea, the soft young green of the grain and grass, the scarlet splashes of the frequent poppies, even the smooth white surface of the winding, mounting road—all charmed us. On the last steep rise before reaching Loreto children were busily searching in the hedges, and we asked our driver what they were collecting in the deep cups they carried. It turned out to be snails for eating.

"I suppose they are very good?" I asked.

"Signora, they are an exquisite food," said our driver, and then explained with gusto the method of treating them, the number of days they must be kept in salt and water till the shell could be removed, and the way of cooking which would make the most of this delicacy when finally prepared for the table.

Loreto is little more than a long street of booths for the sale of rosaries, medals and images, ending in a stately piazza where stand its three great buildings, the church of the Holy House, with its bell of eleven tons, the Jesuit's College, and the Apostolic Palace. Their long pillared colonnades frame the cold stone-paved quadrangle, and a great fountain uprears itself in the centre. The village has a remarkable history, retreating into a

retrospect so remote as to create the liveliest surprise that even its least details are authenticated; but that they are so, we are assured.

Briefly related it runs something as follows: The house of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth having become an object of profound veneration to all Christians, they made it the goal of many a pilgrimage. After a time the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, had a basilica erected over it; but later, when Palestine fell into the hands of the Saracens, a miracle became necessary to save it from desecration. Therefore angels lifted it bodily and in the year 1291 carried it to Dalmatia. Three years later, however, it was again removed by the same angelic agency and borne to this spot, where it was deposited in the garden of a woman named Laureta. We are in possession of a little book containing a map and an exact diagram of the route taken by the angels in both the first and second transportation. After it was located in Loreto a church was built over it, houses sprang up about it, and believers flocked hither from all quarters till it has become the great Italian centre of pilgrimage.

Within the lofty church and almost lost in its vastness is the little rough brick structure, the Holy House, but entirely covered upon the outside by a superb carved marble screen. Through two doors in it you can enter, and within the small space kneel the devout, adoring the little black wooden image of the Virgin in its magnificent shrine, while silver and gold lamps hang from the ceiling, giving light and showing the uneven brick walls polished to a surface almost like glass by the kisses of penitents. A low, broad marble step runs round the outside and in this are two deep rounded ruts, worn by those who make their penitential progress round it upon their knees! Untold riches have been lavished upon the

interior of the church, and work is still going on. One immense apartment is the Treasury, and in this are preserved as in a museum the offerings of all kinds showered upon the Virgin. It is a bewildering glitter of gold and precious stones used in every possible way—candlesticks four feet high covered with embedded coral, golden goblets, a crucifix of rock-crystal set with emeralds of great size, silver vases, rich robes, banners, and jewelry of all sorts, from objects of almost no value, such as silver watches, up to the costliest that can be found.

At one end of the room is a large glass case in which the letters I. N. R. I. much elaborated and embellished are formed entirely of rings that have been given. There are seven hundred in this one case, but these are a small part of what may be seen there, scattered everywhere in ropes and garlands. The case that interested us most was one containing the jewels of a certain marchesa of Genoa, left as an offering in her will. I fear there were repinings among her surviving relatives, for the lady had an unimpeachable taste in jewels and had made a rare collection of them, necklace after necklace, brooches, bracelets, rings and ornaments for the hair, almost all of rubies set with diamonds—a blaze of glorious red fire. Looking upon them one was moved to imagine her personality. Of course she was beautiful, with the rich brunette beauty that these stones would have so set off. She had not always been devout, for only a long attention to worldly delights could have assembled these rubies and arranged them with such a coquetry of variety. What had been her career, what her experiences and emotions? Had a crisis in her life suddenly wrenched her soul from earthly joy to plunge it into dejection? Was she forced to seek heavenly consolation, thus snatching these trinkets from the altar of vanity to offer them at the shrine of the Virgin's seven times pierced heart?

We wove a romance about her, but in our pagan minds desired that the jewels might be released to figure again in that world of glitter and luxury, of revelry and beauty, to which they belonged.

RECANATI.

Now shalt thou rest forever, rest till death,
Tired heart. Thy last illusion perisheth —
The dream thou wast eternal. It is gone.
Of all thy fond illusions none remain;
The hope, the very wish to hope, is flown.
Rest there forever. Thou hast throbbed thy fill.
— LEOPARDI. *Trans. by J. A. Symonds.*

Wandering through this idyllic country and ignoring the railways, we are happy in the independence of little open carriages, which can always be found to suit one's desire when the impulse comes to move on. So this morning, while the dew still lay on the tangled hedges festooned with honeysuckle, and the wild flowers, whose bright faces show themselves wherever an inch is left them, upon the borders of the carefully cultivated fields, we drove away from Loreto. With us we bore a precious treasure — not a sacred image of the Virgin, not a blest rosary, but, who could guess? — a tiny wire support for a lamp-shade. How many times in obscure inns have we seated ourselves in the evening beside an unshaded lamp which made letter-writing almost too trying to the eyes, and how many times have we not determined to invent some protection, and cast about for an idea. And now here it was, complete and perfect, weighing nothing, susceptible of being flattened to lay in the bag, adjustable to any lamp-chimney. Oh happy chance! I called upon our cheerful little maid, whose name by the way was Pulizia (cleanliness). When I commented

upon this extraordinary appellation, not at first thinking I could have heard it correctly, she smilingly confirmed my pronunciation, and when I remarked that it was indeed an uncommon and admirable name, she admitted it, with an air of modest complacency.

"Pulizia," said I, "do you not think the *padrone* would permit me to buy this delightful object?" Pulizia allowed that he might, as he could get another in the town. So I carried it down to the door in my hand as we went to take our carriage, and begged him to put a price upon it. He looked a little surprised but indulgently consented to part with it for the sum of four cents, and it has taken its place among our most valued effects.

This province of the Marches becomes more and more beautiful as one penetrates further into it—a quiet agricultural country, whose pictorial farmhouses give such pleasure to the eye. The immemorial vine and olive flourish, the silkworm labors, and amid all the green, last year's haystack stands yellow and brown at the angle of each house, looking like a large round loaf which has been irregularly sliced away with a sharp knife till sometimes only a many-sided column is left supported by the pole which formed the centre of the stack. Near by there is often the woodpile, but that is but a prosaic name for the form it takes here, which is circular, pointed at the top, and altogether resembling a magnified pine cone, while the ends of the sticks, all pointing outward, represent the separate scales.

It was but two hours alternately ascending and descending to Recanati, our next stopping-place, which is loftily situated, as the guide-books say, following the waving line of the comb of a ridge and looking over intervening hilltops to the blue Adriatic. It was an important fortified place in the Middle Ages, but it looks

very unwarlike now, and lies well open to the sunlight and the hill breezes. Our interest here outside of the mere pleasure of happy exploration was divided between Lorenzo Lotto, some of whose finest paintings lie hidden in this remote hill town, and Leopardi, the saddest of poets, and but for the glory of his verse the unhappiest of men, or so it seems when one reads of his embittered life, his many trials, his early death. So we went first to the Leopardi palace, which stands at one extremity of the serpentine course followed by the irregular city. We found it in perfect preservation, built on the simplest lines of smooth brick, buff inclining to pink in tone, its long façade upon the street extended by the still longer high wall of its invisible garden. The severity of the whole was, however, relieved by one thing; along the full length of the coping at the top of the wall stood a row of flower-pots close enough to touch and filled with beautiful blossoming plants.

Standing in the warmth of the cloudless noon we rang at the portal and were presently admitted. The whiteness, the silence, the purity inside I can hardly describe. A quiet coolness rested there, and we felt the hush of it as we followed the old servant who conducted us toward the library, which is all that is shown to strangers. It was not a house of gloom and vast spaces; one's imagination could picture the life of a family as having gone on there, but somehow mirth and laughter seemed foreign to it, a subdued existence, dreamy or melancholy, was all the fancy could connect with its past. On the stairway exquisite bits of antique carved marble were inserted here and there in the walls. One little square there was, so delicate and perfect that though I seldom covet antiquities I could not help longing to possess it, a St. Jerome with a sleeping lion that might have been cut for a cameo.

From the head of the stairs we passed into the library, a series of connecting rooms or recesses along the line of windows upon the front, not large and with ceilings rather low, books lining the walls as high as the hand could reach, perfectly preserved and mostly bound in vellum. A beautiful order and spotlessness characterized everything and withal there was no air of an uninhabited place; it was as though the dweller might step in at any moment. The books were classified and catalogued. I took some of them from the shelves, thinking of the marvelous boy who once held them in his hands, and of the cruel circumstances of his life in this house. I pictured the father, a selfish, oblivious recluse shut in his library, the mother, a stern masculine being, absorbed in parsimonious saving that the wrecked fortunes of the family might be re-established — both utterly neglectful of the wonderful precocity of the spirit that burned in that frail body, so that before he had reached manhood his health was hopelessly broken.

The old servant, seeing that we lingered over the objects in these rooms and were sincerely interested in them, pointed out a window within sight where that sweet-voiced daughter of a stable-keeper who so charmed poor Leopardi loved to sit and sing at her work while he listened at a distance. Alas! that the love he so passionately longed for never came to warm his heart, then or afterwards. He lived like a caged bird in the dullest of Italian towns, refused indulgence, recreation, change of scene, which might have partially restored him; often for months together cut off from the use of his eyes and the resource of study. What wonder that unhappiness breathed through all his beautiful verse and that his has been called the philosophy of despair.

Besides the books there were old portraits, richly carved wood in high relief, majolica, exquisite little

antiquities chosen with rare taste, a cunningly wrought cloak clasp, a tiny lamp in the shape of a swan especially attracted us. Much of Leopardi's handwriting was preserved here, from the age of nine years up, as clear as print and almost as regular. A yearning pity takes possession of one in the contemplation of these memorials—a longing to have had the privilege of making life a little more endurable to this suffering soul who so often met with the chill of disillusion or the harshness of rebuff. He found no sympathy in Recanati in his own day, but at present it values him sufficiently to devote a small show-window to copies of his poems, as we noticed in driving past it a little later. Opposite is his statue, in a sombre revery, its unseeing eyes fixed upon the sunny emptiness of the wide piazza in which it stands.

MACERATA.

Between Recanati and Macerata a great gulf lies, and one spends the hours of the journey from one to the other in making a long meandering descent and then climbing slowly up again, till the city appears, set upon the highest ground in sight, and just covering the platform leveled for it upon its mountain-top. A girdling terrace encircles its walls upon the outside, shaded by trees and commanding a marvelous view of miles of surrounding beauty. Our patient horses having rounded the last curve and brought us up to the gateway, we entered and clattered along the stony streets, between its high impassive buildings. However slowly an Italian driver may have been conducting you through the open country, he never fails to lash himself and his horses into a becoming frenzy of excitement for the passage through a town, and with bells jingling and whip cracking like a volley of musketry, he tears through the

streets, scattering the foot-passengers to right and left, almost grazing the bare legs of the children, and calling to the windows all the inhabitants within doors. Thus we proceeded, and finally drew up at the dingy low-arched door of the Hotel Milano, where we were met by a stout landlady and her myrmidons, and conveyed upwards, a direction in which things under such circumstances as these almost always improve; for whereas one may be filled with misgivings upon the level of the street, the second story is apt to offer reassurance and the third or fourth may break into absolute good cheer.

Our rooms, however, proved to be entirely bereft of the beautiful outlook we longed to feast upon during our brief stay, and we expressed discontent thereat—was there no room with a view? The landlady was most disturbed, but she feared not; she adjured her attendant maids and porters, could these respected ladies be accommodated with a view? The house was patronized by the aristocracy, it was ever full. What was to be done? Did any one know, for instance, had the Marquis of Aldobrando any intention of leaving on the morrow? A variety of opinions was offered. But at least, was the Marquis abroad at that moment? Could not the ladies have the satisfaction of seeing his apartment and the view it commanded? There was clattering over the halls and stairs, and presently from the attendants disposed within easy shouting distance of one another came the assurance that the noble Marquis was without, in the town. We glanced at the stern simplicity of our quarters and filled with visions of titled luxury above, ascended with alacrity.

But alas for romance! we had perhaps gone a little too high. The Marquis' apartment looked strangely like an attic chamber, and a small one. Its brick floor, its narrow iron bed, its bare wooden dressing-table were

unadorned, and the Marquis' property, which was represented by a pair of boots somewhat the worse for wear, under the table, and a litter of papers upon it, left little to the imagination. The view, too, proved to be a limited oblique glimpse from the one small gable window, and so, heaving a sigh of disillusionment, we descended to our first choice. It was roomy, it was high, its tile floor had not so very long ago been sprinkled and swept; the coarse linen sheets upon the bed were white and clean, and besides this it proved to open into a large salon, with tall presses against the walls, a heavy sofa, some family portraits of stern, fixed expression and a round table in the centre. This looked encouraging, and we asked if our meals could be served here. It was consented to, for no amount of running up and down stairs to and from a distant kitchen discourages people who have never seen dumb-waiters or elevators, and so we settled ourselves quite contentedly and proceeded to remove the dust of travel. And when, a little later, we leaned upon our broad window-sill in the soft twilight and beheld the old *palazzo* opposite, with its heavy sculptured coats of arms over every window, and presently watched the pretty Italian maid appearing successively at them to close the shutters and light the rooms, we fell a-dreaming of the lingering scion of an ancient aristocracy that must inhabit this stately antiquity, and were happy. Soon after, when we were recalled to things material by the damsel who announced that dinner was served, we sat in much content on opposite sides of the round table, which bore savory dishes of roasted kid and artichokes, and whose tablecloth was made a focus of light by our twinkling candles, which evoked obscure glimmerings as their rays touched some piece of old mahogany or faintly illumined the observant eyes of the portraits presiding over our meal.

Macerata being but a few hundred years old, is called modern by a population accustomed to cities whose foundations were laid in the age of myth and legend, and it offers to the visitor rather less than usual of association and memorial. In the morning we searched out its library, upon the upper floor of the building that harbored it, and found that it was closed in the middle hours of the day; and when we returned later, we had still to wait a little outside its door, in company with one of its choleric citizens, whose impatience to be admitted and whose disapprobation of exclusion at any period of the day roused him to an apostrophe which might have been heard on the street below.

The object of our interest within was the small picture gallery, which occupied a room opening from those containing the books. And here, as at Ancona, it was the Crivelli Madonna that we sought. She was there and stood looking out at us with a serious reflective air, as she absently bent her head a little to one side to meet the caress of the *bambino* whom she balanced upon her hands held flatly, as though bearing a salver. Her hair was covered with a simple bit of closely drawn drapery but in her mantle the magnificence that Crivelli loved was given free play, for it was covered with a wealth of embroidery in fanciful conventionalized design — spiked stars, grape-leaves and fruits. The librarian who had conducted us to it returned several times and hovered about us, whether with the intention of especial courtesy or of inability to understand our spending so much time before one picture without entertaining dishonest longings with regard to it, we could not tell, so unfathomable was the expression of his curious face. At all events he ended by making us a little uncomfortable and he accompanied us to the door upon our departure with an air in which we fancied irony and relief to be blended.

Outside we explored the streets and everywhere found the appearance of the city so thrifty and respectable that we could not help longing to be met more frequently by a shade of neglect, a little of the rust of age. No doubt it is a matter for just complacency to the inhabitants of Macerata that their municipality contains not only a university but an agricultural college and that their buildings are in a state of such scrupulous repair, though to the ungrateful traveler these are matters of secondary importance and we were almost at a loss to account for the existence there of our old *palazzo* with the sculptured coats of arms.

But even if there were nothing very interesting inside its walls, it would be worth while to go there for the view from its ring terrace. One may stroll round it more than once and not have taken a long ramble and the prospect in every direction is so varied and beautiful that it would take long to learn even one of its aspects by heart. Many a high-lying adamantine old town adheres to the neighboring heights like an accretion of time, and many a narrow ravine or open valley lies between, while beyond, such a panorama of snowy peaks unrolls before one as can hardly be matched elsewhere. The tumultuous sweep of this heaving upland which, overlooked from the height of Macerata, almost seems to rock under one's feet, appeared, beneath the heavy clouds of a stormy sunset through which lightnings played now and again, hardly less the solitary abode of nature for the watchful eyries of its isolated villages; and as one lingers while darkness comes on, and its salient points define themselves more sharply against the sky, while its depths veil themselves in purple obscurity, a feeling of creeping estrangement settles down upon one, before the loneliness and silence that seem to wrap the whole earth in that hour.

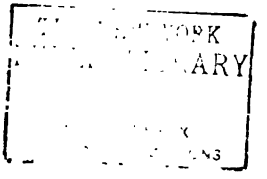
ASCOLI.

"Giù nell' opima valle, dal Tronto agil bagnata,
Ricca d'olive e vino e pur di querce ombrata,
Tu siedi, città bella; di tue moli orgogliosa,
Nuova letizia infondi, dovunque l' occhio posa.
Tu vedi arditi e saldi vecchi ponti romani
Opporsi da mille anni dell' onda agli urti immani."

The approach to Ascoli is by the long, straight, gently ascending valley of the river Tronto which the traveler follows for twenty-one miles from the shore of the Adriatic. It lies in the fork of two lesser streams which here converge to form the greater and beyond it glitter the loftiest snow-walls of the Apennines. Hills rise on either hand, terrace above terrace, with here and there an alluring villa that makes one long for access to it. The town itself one could never weary of; its serious gray stone streets, the remains of the grim towers with which the place once bristled, standing up sternly forbidding here and there, the ancient walls, the arched gateways, but especially the colossal bridges and aqueducts that span both the rivers—all are enchanting. It is a matter for surprise that these aqueducts are not more generally celebrated, for they are fine examples, of great size, and in perfect preservation.

Everywhere there is beautiful architecture, almost undisturbed by modern alteration or addition, the houses so built, centuries ago, sufficing for the needs of the townsfolk of to-day. Crossing the place from side to side one is charmed by the river banks, where gardens are terraced down to the edge of the water and show the presence of underground passages as a means of descending the steep pitch of many feet. Even the prison, once a castle, would serve the most fastidious story-teller as the scene of romance, and the little bridge which leads

Ascoli. The Aqueduct.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from it, spanning the narrow gorge of the river here, and which one may only look at but not approach, is a picture in itself.

From the amount of staring we evoke as we pursue our explorations it is to be inferred that few tourists find their way here, but we like the people, who do not hang about to get money out of strangers, but bear themselves with independent self-respect. They are a vigorous, interesting race, with vivid characteristics, and it is their boast that they furnish the strongest, the best disciplined and the most gallant soldiers in Italy to the national army to-day. The sturdy women carry copper buckets of unusual size and antique form to the public fountains and hourly remind one of the delightful collection of brass and copper vessels for water, both hot and cold, which might be made in Italy, all graceful and all differing in shape in the various provinces. The weight of these Ascoli buckets must be great when filled with water, but a handsome peasant woman this morning readily consented to be model for the camera and swung hers, brimming with water, to her head with perfect ease. She waited some moments with it poised there, unsupported by her hand, but when we afterwards offered to pay her would take nothing.

All our questions are cordially and pleasantly answered and we are neither followed by inquisitive children nor besieged by hungry guides, so that with the manners of the native population we have no fault to find; but there is a class of their visiting countrymen who do cause us acute discomfort. We should be very much at our ease in our little hotel, where we have two well-lighted bedrooms at forty cents apiece the day. Meals, of course, are extra and are cheap and well cooked, but in the dining-room, where we have a small table to ourselves, in a position as retired as possible, we

sit somewhat uneasily, for the centre of the room is occupied by the class above alluded to, whose table manners it is a pain to contemplate. I refer to the Italian commercial traveler, who frequents even retired Ascoli. Around a large table congregate this week about ten of these cheerful and loudly conversing persons. All of them are good looking and well dressed, one or two strikingly handsome, yet their behavior at table transcends in awfulness even that of those magnificent German officers we have all seen, who lightly alternate the courses of the table d'hôte with the use of a pocket-comb. That they are quite unconscious of their shortcomings, however, and are not without a code of manners, is proved by the way in which they never fail to salute the table of the signore with a respectful and even courtly inclination as they pass out of the dining-room. We gravely return the salutation and do not tarry in the dining-room longer than is needful, endeavoring while we remain to fix our attention upon any curious and unwonted viands supplied to us.

The dessert which appears oftenest at this season is a tastefully arranged *giardinetto* or fruit dish containing three things — oranges, fennel-root and beans. Though with the best intention in the world of doing in Rome as the Romans do, we have given up trying to enjoy the two latter. The great white roots of the fennel, larger than the oldest onion and almost as high flavored, find great favor here and also the beans, of a strong, coarse variety in thick, succulent pods, five or six inches long. Breaking open the pod the beans are to be taken out and dipped in salt. We never refuse to taste any new dish and indeed enjoy fresh sensations of the kind, but to acquire a permanent liking for it is sometimes beyond us. For instance, chicory salad is a delicacy the bitterness of which custom cannot sweeten, and basil,

used raw as a relish, one can hardly be reconciled to, though memories of Isabella mourning over her pathetic flower-pot make one long to feel a fondness for it. On the other hand, the Italians have discovered uses for things which we wastefully throw away and which are really good. The stalks of artichokes are tied up like asparagus and sold in the Florentine markets, and make an acceptable dish prepared in several different ways. There are certain other vegetables and some nuts and fruits unfamiliar to us about which there may be more than one opinion, but surely all the world would agree in celebrating that triumph of Italian cookery, *fritto misto*.

There are many possibilities in *fritto misto*; indeed, guessing would be difficult the first time one sits down to it. A platter is placed before one, heaped up with golden-brown fried morsels of various shapes. Do not imagine a heavy, oily mass. By no means; all is most delicate and free from fat or grease. Many kinds of vegetables, as well as liver, sweetbreads and other things of the sort may be used, but our favorite combination is artichokes, calves' brains, melon-flowers and squash. The latter is a squash I have never seen elsewhere; very small, bright green without and yellow within, it is cut into long, thin ribbons about the size of macaroni. When well cooked, and it is very rare to find it ill-prepared, this is a dish fit for the gods, and wherever we are we order it for one course.

We enjoy here the ministrations of a young waiter who is pursuing the study of English, and who is charmed with the proficiency he has attained. In Ascoli he naturally has few opportunities to exercise this accomplishment, and so never loses an occasion to practice it with us. The other day he bore in a smoking platter of *fritto misto*, and setting it down before us with a fine flourish,

announced "Mingle-ed fried stew!" Polenta also is delicious as it is made here (I have tried in vain to imitate it at home), corn-meal boiled to a certain consistency, and sometimes served with a covering of grated cheese browned in the oven. Occasionally unexpected surprises meet us. For instance, once it was inquired whether we should like peas for dinner. We at once admitted that we should and wondered somewhat that they did not appear in the natural order of the meal. What was our amusement, however, to have them presented raw and in their pods as a dessert.

But to return from the discussion of the food offered in Ascoli to its natural beauty and human interest. Virtually ignorant of all but the name of the place before we reached it, we have learned to love it and to study with the deepest interest its present condition and what we can discover of its local inheritance of custom, rite and legend that descends from an antiquity hardly penetrated as yet by antiquarian research. The remnants of a religion so old that the inhabitants themselves hardly recognize it for what it is, yet cling to the villages in the surrounding mountains. The worship of Mars, for example, is still represented at Monte Rubbiano, where, on a certain day, the *contadini* raise upon a branch the woodpecker, sacred to the god of war, and doing honor to it with loud acclaim, carry it through the village in procession; and it is touching to learn that the mother still lays in the coffin of her dead child the toys that he has played with in life, and presses into the little cold palm a silver coin for the ferry of Charon. There are strange beliefs in witches and enchanters and lively imaginations people the mountains and forests with a thousand legendary beings, and in the long winter evenings at the fireside both men and women recount in almost Homeric strain tales of kings and queens, of knights and dames, of arms and love; and

Ascoli. The Castle.

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veritable epics exist, handed down from father to son by word of mouth.

Their Lake Pilato, buried in a valley so high and shadowed that the snow never quite leaves it even in summer, is the centre of much folk-lore, the abode of the fox, the wolf and the dolphin, favorite characters and subjects of a whole cycle of legends. Christian forms are often curiously interwoven with pagan survivals, as, for example, the worship of San Domenico, which is here connected with serpents. A visit to his sanctuary will cure the bites of vipers and on the day of his festa his statue, the interior of which is perforated with holes, is surrounded with living snakes, which are encouraged to crawl through and about it.

The feast of Saint Emidio, the patron of Ascoli, comes in the heat of August, a propitious time, as they think, between the grain harvest and the anticipation of a fruitful vintage, and any one who is prepared to sacrifice two or three nights' sleep may enjoy the animated occasion. Fifteen days previously the day is announced by the sound of the church bells and this is responded to by all the children in the town, who having secured beforehand toy terra-cotta bells prepared for this use, ring them madly from the windows of all the houses, and youthful peddlers of little lanterns for the illumination of the houses at night issue forth with their wares, some of which are roughly painted with portraits of the saint, amusingly but unintentionally grotesque.

The slow progress of ox-carts toward Ascoli from various directions is a picturesque part of the proceedings. The carts in this vicinity are decorated with careful elaboration. Bright blue is a favorite groundwork color, and upon this often appear garlands of roses and portraits of distinguished ladies in low-cut gowns. Striking enough on ordinary occasions, at this time they are fairly dazzling,

draped and festooned as they are with red, for from all the neighborhood the *contadini* flock in to take part in the festivities, the lads with jaunty jacket attached to one shoulder and a peacock's feather in the cap, and the girls wearing their fullest and smartest balloon-like petticoats. All circulate through the streets, from which rise a chorus of shouts, cries, salutations, that fills the air until evening, when they assemble in the main squares to listen to the serenades, as they are called. One or two musicians saw more vigorously than melodiously upon violins perhaps fashioned from the wood of their own forests. Another torments a species of violoncello, sometimes painted green and often minus a string, which is apt to have a curious and rudely contrived bridge of fish bone. The singer, with an elbow gracefully bent upon the shoulder of one of the violinists, begins his song and warbles endlessly on till his brow is moist and his throat dry and parched.

A *contadina* loves to boast of the number of serenades her lover has paid for in her honor and a part of the affair is that she shall stand arm in arm with him before the musicians while one of them brushes her face lightly with a twig of basil. She meanwhile gazes upon the ground and must on no account allow herself to laugh or even smile, while her lover, assuming a haughty and fixed expression, smokes his cigar vigorously and looks sternly before him. The basil is a great feature of the occasion and everywhere its odor floats on the air. Each lad must wear a sprig over one ear and the girl one upon her breast or tucked into her girdle, and great is the sale thereof upon the steps of the Duomo. Other sports take place on this occasion, for there are lottery drawings and races, and by day the wildest and most riotous noise goes on in the open air, while in contrast a hushed and solemn throng fills the cathedral, and those who have what they think to be diseases of the bones struggle

silently to reach the sacred urn, lowered to the floor on this occasion, containing the remains of the saint. Through the pushing, jostling crowd they slowly make their way toward it, for they know that even grazing the shoulder against it on this propitious day ensures a cure.

So the day proceeds, and for yet another night the tireless holiday-makers emulate one another in keeping up the tumult, till at last exhausted but happy they mount their carts and straggle away into the country, to recount the pleasure past and wait for the joyous return of the fête of Saint Emidio.

SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO.

The twenty miles of gradual descent from Ascoli to the sea are pleasantly taken by carriage and it is not difficult to secure a pair of stout horses and a comfortable vehicle for the trip. There are few windings and turnings to the highway which one follows, and from either side of the long lateral valley grassy hills rise abruptly, those on the south being much higher. The eye of a traveler fond of walking, at once takes in tempting possibilities on that side, for it looks as though one might follow the backbone of the range for miles, enjoying incomparable views over the country, and pausing at intervals at the fascinating towns, which, as a local guidebook which we unearthed with much pains at Ascoli remarks, "sit astride of the eminences." A smiling country it is, full of fruit-trees, grain and vegetables, and as we passed along we noticed a row of peasants among the wheat, the bright headgear of the women, red, yellow and white, making bits of delightful contrast with the fresh green. We asked our driver what they were doing and he explained that they were weeding. We thought of the Montana wheatfields we had seen, miles in extent,

and of the owners' surprise at having them weeded like a garden-bed. But so it was, and one may assert that the land was producing three or four crops at once.

Next the road were two lines of mulberry-trees, these for the silkworms, then in rows all over the fields were trees upon which grape-vines were trained, and beneath these again, the grain. The trees to act as trellises for the vines are put in as saplings, and made to grow with a bare trunk for about five feet. Then they are allowed to branch out, the branches being forced to take the form of a cup and strictly pruned. At the end of each of the principal ones a few shoots are permitted to come out in the spring. The grape vines, planted a few inches from the trunk, are supported upon these and the fruit is easily gathered from below. This sounds like a crowded field, and yet they plough it with a yoke of their big oxen to the very trunks of the trees.

Now and then we passed a characteristic villa. It stood at some distance and well elevated upon a hill. From it to the road ran a long, straight, unswerving driveway, terminating at the highway in a fine stone gateway. And here let me say that this gateway forms one of the marked characteristics of a villa as opposed to a farmhouse.

A villa may be comparatively unimportant in size and a farmhouse quite imposing, but the latter never seems to usurp the privilege of the stately entrance. These are of the form familiar to us in pictures, a pair of high stone pillars, square and solid, and a second pair of lower ones, the spaces between being left open, or the masonry curving down from the two taller to the two shorter. Neither is it deemed necessary to continue the magnificence of this beginning; two or three fine cypresses break the sudden termination and the enclosure continues with a humble hedge, or the gateway

Ascoli. A Farmhouse.

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stands as a sort of monumental landmark, with no further division between the road and the field. The villa Piccinnini, which we stopped to have a better view of, is a youthful edifice, dating but half a century back. It has a gateway with modern ornamentation, and the following hospitable inscription carved upon its posts underneath the proprietor's name: *Otia ex studio sibi suis et amicis.*

Between Ascoli and Solmona, our next objective point, we were planning with some timidity to spend a night at San Benedetto del Tronto, a village on the seashore, through which the railway passed. Baedeker was ominously silent in regard to it, dismissing it with a mention of less than a line, but we had decided to venture it and looked a little anxiously at the inn as we approached. The street was clean and the front of the building looked quiet and unobjectionable. So did the interior as we entered, and at the top of the three flights of stairs up which the landlady conducted us we were shown into a pretty little suite of rooms faultlessly neat, comfortably furnished, and looking from windows of generous size out over the intervening streets to the sea. We glanced at each other with the self-satisfaction of successful pioneers, and admired the shell ornaments on the *etagere* of the salon and the Parian statuette of two lovers intertwined in an ardent embrace. The question of dinner was brought forward, the hour and the viands that the signore would prefer inquired, and having discharged that responsibility we hurried to the seashore, for we could see that the fishing-boats were coming in, with their beautiful golden and terra-cotta sails full spread. If only we could have arrived an hour sooner!

These were but the stragglers, for already scores of the little craft were drawn up on the beach and a noisy and busy scene was being enacted. As fast as the boats were beached two toy anchors were thrown out, one

astern and one on the sandy shore, then the nets were hung up to dry upon the mast and soon the long perspective of boats appeared to be furnished with sails of fishing net, while the shouting, hurrying fishermen brought the day's catch out upon the sand, whence it was carried in baskets to a large paved court close by, where it was sorted and packed at once to be sent away. We strayed along the shore, looking curiously into the different baskets and noting the variety of kinds. Of course the cuttlefish interested us most, strange, forbidding little objects, which are yet such a dainty when prepared for the table. Only in shape are they forbidding, however; in color they are various and charming, soft gray, pale blue, or iridescent with changing opaline hues.

Stooping over a basket beside which stood a tall, slim girl with her head and shoulders enveloped in a black shawl, I made some idle remark about its contents. She remained gazing out to sea, and returned so slight an answer that I looked up. It is rare that the least conversational advance is not met with instant cordiality and I wondered a little at her manner. I ventured another question and this time she turned, bringing the great dark eyes that had been fixed upon the horizon slowly back and letting them rest upon the stranger, abstractedly at first, with the half-bewildered look of one whose attention is unwillingly withdrawn from an absorbing thought. For a moment she hesitated, then a change came over her face, her eyes seemed to search for sympathy, her lips trembled, she half whispered a broken sentence, and then with a deep in-drawn breath, a torrent of speech burst from her. She wrung her hands and tears streamed down her cheeks as she told a story so pitiful, so moving, that before she finished my own eyes were wet. It was but one more of those tragedies that end the lives of so many sea-faring folk—a brave struggle

with the storm, a prolonged cruel death, clinging to the wreck till deadly chill and washing waves ended all. Even death did not loosen the despairing hold upon the overturned boat, and so they found him.

As the girl talked, with tears and vehement gestures, the coast guardsman came up, a fine sturdy fellow, and added his calmer explanations. Yes, Nello had been the finest fellow on the shore, so strong, so industrious, a famous fisherman. It was hard, but so it must be. The seas claimed some every year. Lisetta should not stand here every day when the boats came in, it was *triste*, but she would not be kept away. Life must go on and the rest were not hard-hearted that they must keep on with their labor, as though death had not come among them. The hopelessness of lightening such grief saddened the afternoon and sent us home heavy-hearted. In the still evening air on the shore of that tranquil blue water it was hard to realize how close to heart-break lived these toilers of the sea—in the midst of what peril, uncertainty, menace, their years are passed; for they are not an uncheerful folk, and the bustle and activity of poor Nello's companions were no less animated that afternoon for the cruelty of the fate that had just overtaken him.

IN THE ABRUZZI.

On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.

—*Manfred.*

AS any water in the world the surface of pure turquoise blue which the Adriatic showed us as we followed its shore beyond San Benedetto? Here and there a single fishing-boat with magically dyed sails hovered near and seemed to slide over the glassy expanse almost without a ripple, but we could see bird-like flocks of them out upon the horizon. Then we turned from the coast-line and began to take our way through emerald green valleys opening out to the sea, and then ascending and leaving these behind we passed through gradations of a less and less lavish verdure till masses of rugged brown rock heaped themselves around us and we knew we were in the Abruzzi and approaching Solmona. One has a feeling of having risen considerably in altitude and yet Solmona is not really high and when you reach it you have gained not much over fifteen hundred feet, but the progress from the smiling valleys below to these gaunt mountains with their brown scarred sides is illusive. These walls, when the vicinity of Solmona is reached,

retire apart and leave a fine broad valley at the upper end of which sits the town, "my cool home abounding in water," as poor Ovid called it, from the arid waste of his long exile; and what must be the surprise of that genial poet, if he is conscious at present of the fact that his memory survives in the songs of the peasants here as that of a mighty sorcerer.

Solmona is not a walled city and the railway station is something like a mile beyond the town. Between them the Monzù, one of its two hotels, is almost in the country. We had been in doubt where to stop, but at sight of this great untempting barrack we left it behind us and entered the closely built portion of the city where the Italia appeared much more attractive. Since settling ourselves in it we find our rooms assailed by noises of many sorts from within as well as from without, and we can to a certain extent take part in the affairs which provoke the latter, as we are not very much raised above the narrow street upon which our windows give. The space is so trifling that separates us from those on the opposite side of the way, and the near view of roofs and balconies as well as the more distant one of mountain peaks is so tempting that we spend considerable time communing with the outer world from our casements.

We have also sauntered much in the streets. There is a fine, extensive market-place, to which broad, low stone steps descend from the slightly higher level of the principal street. Walking out upon this piazza and then turning for a backward view, a harmonious grouping of unusual architectural points is seen. Across the middle of the stone staircase creeps like a great caterpillar a low-arched heavy aqueduct, and just beyond towers a beautiful Romanesque portal with a bit of wall, all that is left of the ancient church which once stood there, while still further away is a background of mounting tiles, a peeping

loggia and a little round tower. The foreground leaves nothing to be desired, if there is always the assemblage of little booths, shaggy donkeys and gossiping crones which we saw.

There seems, by the way, an unusual preponderance of old women here, and they appear in brave attire and are especially fond of beads. Around their withered throats are strings of dark red coral or large gold beads, and their ear-rings, usually of gold and enamel, are so long that they frequently sweep their shoulders, while they look too heavy to be worn without discomfort. The matter of beads is a local interest in Italy. Here in Solmona, as I have said, gold beads and dark red coral seem to be the popular varieties, yet when I examined what I had taken to be coral I decided that such long strings, so perfect in shape and uniform in color, could not be real coral at all but must be a substitute for it. The gold beads, which I have no doubt are genuine, are probably handed down from generation to generation and it gives one a feeling of satisfaction to observe that here the grandmothers do not feel it necessary to despoil themselves of their adornments and retire into undecorated sobriety while the younger generation flaunts in the family jewels. The respect for age, which is such a lovable trait in the Italian character, would consider such a disposition of family treasures entirely unsuitable, so the dear old people keep their importance and the pleasurable consciousness of their finery. The little jeweler's shop here contains some interesting engraved seals, looking old and genuine, but I am not wise enough to be certain of their antiquity. I saw no pearls, such as are an almost indispensable part of a *contadina's* bridal outfit in Tuscany. There the *vezzo*, as it is called, consists of several strings of irregular pearls, and may cost from twenty-five dollars to several hundred, according to the amount which her

father can afford to give her, or which her own ambition and industry has put by for the purpose. It often represents in value one-half her dowry.

In other shops along the way, numbers of sugar rosaries were exposed, a specialty of Solmona, of great size, elaborate decoration and most brilliant colors! One wonders who buys these things, which must be expensive and are so perishable. Beyond the busier portion of the town we came upon a small bindery, where a few curious tomes of real antiquity were exposed in the window. A bindery of the sort in this little place, where it is safe to suppose a large part of the population cannot read, attracted us and we went in. The binder proved to be an intelligent man, and though his little stock contained but a few volumes, to my amazement and pleasure almost the first I took up was one I had long wanted, and had thought it but a chance to find even in Rome: a small yellowed copy of Cavalca's Lives of the Holy Fathers. I gladly paid the modest price he demanded for the little work and bore it off in triumph, together with an interesting old book lacking one of its parchment covers, giving delicately executed engravings of ecclesiastical emblems.

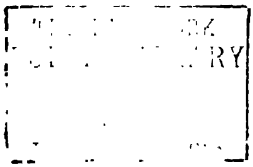
Toward evening the air was deliciously fresh, and the sky became a panorama of glorious cloud effects. We found a rickety little carriage with a boyish driver, and bade him carry us into the country where we might command a wider horizon. As one emerges from the confinement of the streets a little structure high up on the mountain-side catches the eye. Clinging against the bare cliff, it looks almost a projection of the rock itself. It is the retreat of that pious hermit, Piero da Morrone, who, snatched from his holy meditations on this isolated crag of the Abruzzi, was thrust bewildered upon the papal throne—that Pope who "made the great refusal"

and in the stern poet's imagination is driven endlessly through hell, stung by gadflies.

As we advanced we soon came out upon the broad, smooth road, whose even, dividing line runs down the middle of the valley. Green growing things stretched away on either side, and the sweet, pungent smell of some unfamiliar plant tingled in the nostrils. Directly opposite Solmona, at the other end of the valley's long perspective, towering skyward from the converging lines of the lower ridges which enclose it, rose the highest peak of the Apennines, Il Gran Sasso d' Italia, the Great Stone of Italy, a fine name, so direct and simple, as though this majestic mountain required no grandiose title. Its pure snow-enveloped outline rose against the evening sky,—a sky of that pale, clear green that seems to make distance infinite. It was the supreme moment in which to see it, and words fail to convey an idea of the grandeur and beauty with which it dominated the landscape as the gathering twilight threw the dun ranges below more and more into the shadow and concentrated the light and color above—the light seeming almost to emanate from the snow-white mass of the mountain, while the color upon which it was projected grew more vivid and radiant. Watching the wonderful and ever-shifting changes that belong to this hour, we forgot time,—yes, and the very hamperings of gravitation, and seemed to be swimming forward through the clear upper air to meet the phantoms beyond us. Our little nag even appeared to taste the intoxication of the moment and tossed his head as he strained forward. Only the warning of darkness made us turn at last to leave the fading glories behind, and, fastened to earth again, retrace our steps to the twinkling lights of Solmona.

The following morning dawned bright and beautiful, but before eight the sky was overcast and an occasional

Solmona. The Market-place.



flash of lightning played among the black clouds. Church bells began to ring. One was answered by another, till at last the whole air vibrated with a multitudinous tolling. We inquired of our waiter the reason and he explained that it threatened a heavy hail-storm, and that when one came at this season of the year it sometimes destroyed all the crops of the valley, even the fruit; so the bells were all ringing to beseech God's mercy and avert the danger. I was glad to notice that only a few hailstones fell, then rain came and the storm blew over.

We consulted our host about the possibility of going to Scanno, a mountain village some sixteen miles away. He looked dubious, and raised his eyebrows at the idea of trying to spend a night there. He believed that we should fare badly. Would there not be anything to eat? we asked. No, of a truth, it would be nothing short of starvation to attempt it. But, we argued, for a short time we could put up with almost anything. He shrugged his shoulders hopelessly. The inhabitants, we urged, must be obliged to have some sustenance themselves; we might subsist for twenty-four hours upon local fare. Driven to the wall, he allowed that there might possibly be chicken, but no veal — not a morsel! The absence of veal did not strike us as the terrible deprivation it appeared to him. Indeed, at home we had never been accustomed to regard veal as the staff of life, nor indeed as a valued dainty. In Italy it is different; there is no doubt that here it is a much prized and respected viand. However, after some indecision, we concluded to compromise on going for the day and carrying our luncheon with us, an arrangement which proved later to have been the part of wisdom.

After the usual amount of time given to bargaining for a carriage, we sallied forth, and, wheeling to the east,

began to follow a tributary valley, from which we soon struck into a wild, rocky ravine, at the bottom of which babbled the fine mountain stream of the Sagittario. It was a stern defile of surprising length, and from the edges of beetling cliffs above us stony little towns gazed down with suspicious distrust, at least so it seemed to us. They were secure from attack as far as we were concerned, for whatever approach they may have had was not discernible from the Sagittario. It must have been at least two hours before we issued from the defile and came into view of Scanno. We began to meet the women and girls of the village, as in twos or threes they descended the long hill which led down from it on the way to a certain distant little chapel which they favored, for it was Sunday. Their demeanor was dignified and their dress curiously gloomy for an Italian costume, for here was really a national costume strictly adhered to by the whole population. The gown with full skirt and close-fitting body was black or very dark green, relieved by a narrow band of white at the throat and invariable in form and finish, even to the number of little white buttons which fastened it at the neck. Broad heelless felt shoes covered the feet, and on the top of the head rested a curious head-dress of black cloth folded to resemble a circular flat cap about four inches high, lined and turned up with white at the sides, leaving one straight, narrow end to fall over the hair at the back. Of the hair, however, very little was to be seen. It was divided into strands, tightly braided and wound with what looked to our careful observation like black or brown worsted. The stiff plaits, in which the natural tresses were now entirely concealed by the woolen covering, were then looped and coiled at the back of the head. This, as can be seen, was a more peculiar than beautiful costume, yet it seemed to become the young women,

who were unusually handsome and rosy-cheeked. It appears to be a very unmixed race, with a deep olive and rich red of the southern complexion quite unaffected by the German admixture which is so evident in the north.

Our driver had stopped at the gates, for the streets of Scanno are not calculated for the entrance of any vehicle, and we advanced on foot under the escort of an ever-increasing flock of children. Twenty-five of the most persevering of these (we counted them) attached themselves to us for our stay and never left us for a moment. And I will admit that the inhabitants interested us more than the town itself, where a condition of dirt and ill odors prevailed, surprising in contrast to the self-respecting and cleanly appearance of its women. The latter carefully banished from their demeanor any apparent consciousness of our presence and their distant manner, together with their beauty and fine clothes, took from us the courage to ask them to pose for us, which we longed to do. Not till we had left the village, and, bidding our driver follow us, had begun to stroll down the hill did fate come to our rescue.

Mass was evidently over and the devout were returning. The opportunity was so favorable for looking at them that we seated ourselves against a bank at one side of the road to have a pretext for deliberate observation. At last, to our surprise, two substantial elderly women stopped before us and one of them, with a courteous, deprecating manner, said pleasantly:

"Do the ladies not find it uncomfortable to sit on the ground thus?"

We assured them that we were quite at ease and only resting a little before beginning our drive home, and from this propitious commencement we had soon reached the point of asking if we might photograph

them, to which they agreed at once, the first one remaining always spokeswoman while the other stood smilingly by. Before we separated she requested that we might be so kind as to send them each a copy of the picture when it should be finished, and wrote her address for us easily and in excellent script. Her bearing was so dignified and her voice so agreeable and well-modulated that we left her wondering very much whether she at all represented the average of attainment in Scanno or was a notable exception.

In stopping at a town like Solmona it is an excellent plan to choose the hotel frequented by army officers. Whatever disadvantages it may have, there is sure to be good food, and this is the case at the Italia. Service is slow, but then we, as mere travelers, are of secondary importance. A little observation showed us that half past six was a good hour for dining, for, as we were the only women, we could then mercifully remove the restraint of our presence before the army had more than half finished its repast. The most important table, set in the middle of the dining-room, is sacred to the profession, and soon after seven various members of it,—tall, fine-looking men, enveloped in beautiful long blue cloaks,—begin to assemble. The one who sits nearest our table has placed beside his chair a lower stool. When he arrives he strides across the room in all the splendor of spurs and clanking sword, and with unmoved seriousness produces from an inner pocket a minute dog, which he deposits with decision upon the stool. He starts across the room again in the direction of the sideboard, but if the small dog, imprudently impatient, ventures to spring from the stool and follow him, his master wheels round, replaces and severely reprimands him. He then marches to the sideboard and returns with a lump of sugar, which, with as deep solemnity as before, he administers to his favorite.

Later the little animal is served with a plate of the best the table affords, and sups contentedly beside his master.

By half past seven we have retired to our rooms, and, though great decorum has been preserved while we were present, the noise afterwards is loud and long. Sometimes it indicates pure conviviality, and sometimes swells to a suggestion of hostility, but in the latter case we fear nothing; with this mercurial people such alternations are rapid and harmless. For instance, in the proximity to opposite neighbors into which you are sometimes thrown by the narrowness of streets, it may happen that on a warm afternoon, through the medium of open windows, you are almost present at a quarrel between husband and wife. Voices rise high, tones become strenuous, you are concerned at the disturbance of family tranquility. Alack! this is but the beginning; with the suddenness of a thunder-shower fury takes possession of this once loving pair, their voices mount to a scream, they storm, they hurl injurious epithets. You tremble, and in fancy see the structure of their domestic bliss lying in ruins at their feet. The clamor augments; there will certainly be blows. Horror takes possession of you; this breach can never be healed; it must end in divorce! But the uproar waxes louder and louder; blood will surely flow; there will be murder in another moment! What is to be done? The police can never be called in time; will no one in the opposite building interfere? In distress you hurry to the window, and, terrified, lean forth that you may hear the better. But what is this? There is a lull. A dead silence ensues. Has something terrible taken place? Does one stand in pale affright over the corpse of the other? You shudder; you become more and more apprehensive as the tension lasts; your imagination flies from one conjecture to another, and as the hush continues you begin to feel a

faintness stealing over you. But listen! Can it be that you catch the sound of a conversational word or two? With quaking heart you strain your ears that you may not miss the smallest sound. A moment later you glance down, and, hardly able to believe your eyes, see husband and wife emerge amicably from the street door and stroll cheerfully off together for a walk. Thus it may be seen how, even in the comparative seclusion of Solmona, a dull monotony may be eliminated from the lives of those to whom the outside world does not appear to contribute much of an eventful nature.

AVEZZANO.

Leaving Solmona, we wound our way among the heights and depressions of the Abruzzi and at last crossed the very backbone of the Apennine system before beginning to drop toward the valley of Avezzano. Toward evening we issued from a winding pass, to find ourselves still high up on the side of the mountain wall encircling a wondrous valley—a vision of beauty, bathed in such magic color as may greet the happy traveler who arrives in a fortunate hour. Far below lay the floor of the valley, level as a table, and all around without the intervention of foothills rose splendid purple shoulders and snow-capped peaks. A sky full of huge masses of dark cloud laid deep blue and amethyst shadows upon it all, but through rifts and breaks near the horizon shafts of sunlight poured in and touched a glittering patch of snow here and there. On the right as we descended, the warlike little city of Celano clambered up the rock where that towered and bastioned stronghold frowned, within which the unfortunate Countess Covella was once besieged by her unfilial son Rugierotto. And this is not the only association with

Celano. Here also was born the author of that most famous of old Latin hymns, the *Dies Iræ*, even the translation of which glared lurid in my childish imagination, when I repeated with awe the opening line,

"Day of wrath, and day of burning."

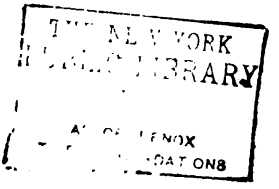
Now a group of women with their copper buckets of rich tint stood round the tall fountain in the open piazza and its whole aspect was so peaceful and welcoming that we were reluctant to pass it by. We could not stay our feet, however, for the longest and most leisurely journey in Italy does not afford time to yield to all the temptations that offer themselves. Our progress must be broken only at Avezzano, and it already lay within sight below us. To it we had been lured by interest in the wonderful work accomplished there by Prince Torlonia. We desired to see the Roman Emissarius and the great farms occupying the now drained Lake Fucino, so we paused not until we had reached the door of its one hostelry, the Victory, from whose large open court we climbed, conducted by a decrepit crone, with a single flickering candle, to our lodging for the night.

In the morning light a look from our elevated chamber window showed us Avezzano as an inconsiderable little village, and the Victory as having its place upon an irregularly shaped piazza, very large and empty, and with high-shouldered old buildings partly surrounding it. Later in the morning, having developed a plan of sight-seeing with the help of the *padrone*, we sallied forth, and diagonally crossing the square, entered a gateway and were in a wide-stretching garden, which flanked the imposing building, a *palazzo* in outward appearance, which contained the offices and granaries of Prince

Torlonia. A civil official put us in charge of one of the employees and we wandered through the garden to a little circular pavilion, from whose veranda we stepped into a tiny museum, a museum of old and new, the remnants of a civilization perhaps older than the Christian era, side by side with the freshest products of a soil tilled with modern knowledge. Pottery there was of varied shapes, some in fragments, some still perfect; heavy bronze helmets, weapons, armor, in all the rich shades of green and brown which time produces upon these beautiful forms of antique workmanship. The lake as it shrank had yielded up its secrets, domestic life and fierce warfare had left their symbols to be gathered up by the posterity of those earlier inhabitants. Even the history of the great emissary pictured upon marble bas-reliefs has filled in the conjectures and researches of the present. But hardly less interesting, in contrast, was the more recent yield of the lake's bed; the heavy sheaves of grain, the nuts of extraordinary size, the rich creamy masses of silk in its natural color as wound from the cocoon, the luscious fruits preserved in spirits, the wine, the oil, the innumerable variety that a rich soil can produce, only part of which of course can be placed on exhibition in a pretty little pavilion in the midst of a walled garden.

From the open air we entered the cool interior of the large building and were then shown the grain in bulk, of the various kinds housed at that season, only a little of the year's growth, our guide said slightingly, but to us the amount was surprising. In great spaces hundreds of feet long, solidly built, and as heavily arched with masonry as the crypt of a cathedral, lay the yellow grain, in golden hillocks, with valleys and gaps between, much more impressive than as though it had been confined in sacks. Different crops occupied different floors, and climbing higher and higher, we at last reached the

Avezzano. The Castle.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top of the building, and coming out into the open air, the geography of the neighboring country spread itself out before us. Upon the different levels of the roof, with their terrace-like expanses bordered by iron railings, we could linger as long as we pleased, and we sat drinking in the delicious morning air, and trying to imagine the romance of the march of history as it had passed over the ground before us.

Juvenile fairy tales have much to say about fairy princes, but if such there were in those happy days, and in our more prosaic ones a sober, middle-aged man may take the place of a slim and beautiful youth, then Prince Torlonia is surely a fairy prince. To tell the story of the magic he has wrought one must go back into a past as old as the Christian era, indeed some years behind it, when the broad plain and its surrounding heights were the abode of an athletic tribe of mountaineers, the Marsi, among the last inhabitants of Italy to submit to the power of Rome. Their valley and their independent life were very dear to them, but their fair lake, apparently the crowning gift and beauty of their province, was an ever-present menace and anxiety. This lake, some thirty-seven miles in circumference and sixty-five feet in depth, had no outlet, and so, in the season of snow torrents from the mountains, was subject to great variations of its level, frequently disastrous to the inhabitants of the banks. In years of inundation, say the old historians, it became a raging sea, almost filling the valley, and engulfing whole villages, after which, when the water subsided, unhealthy marshes remained in the low ground, emitting poisonous miasma, and with the summer heats, bringing fever and disease.

Their suffering in life and property, however, according to their belief, was a thing to be borne, to be mourned, but not to be remedied. To build dykes, to divert

waters, to cut through an isthmus or to drain a swamp, were affronts not likely to be borne good-temperedly by the mythologic deities, to whose will the wayward behavior of their lake was due. All that could properly be done they did, which was to multiply sacrifices upon those altars already in existence, and to raise fresh ones directly upon the banks of the lake, dedicating them with propitiatory offerings and earnest supplications. Nothing, however, seemed to move the goddesses to less capricious behavior, and time after time the fertile valley was filled with panic and suffering. At length this grievous condition of affairs came under the consideration of Julius Cæsar, and a great mind, unconfined by the prejudices of its age, immediately comprehended the natural cause of the disturbance and projected itself to the remedy. He realized too a danger wider than the mere compass of the sore-tried valley, the rendering unproductive of a great extent of territory in central Italy, and the discouragement to agriculture, especially inconvenient as affecting part of the natural source of the food-supply of Rome. He thought of a grand hydraulic undertaking, and at the same time of a highway constructed which should cross the peninsula, join the Adriatic to the capital, and thence extend to a great seaport at Ostia. Included was the draining of the Pontine marshes, and to this he joined in his mind a canal through the isthmus of Corinth, thus restoring health to three sickly regions, opening a highway to the marching armies of Rome and abridging the distance which separated it from the Orient.

A magnificent scheme, but a great life cut off almost before its prime put an end to these vast projects, and it was not until the time of the Emperor Claudius that any part of them was resumed. There was then added reason directly pressing upon Rome, the frequent danger from years of threatened famine. The source of a great supply

to the Eternal City was often cut off; it seemed worth while to try to put through the scheme of Cæsar.

Ways and means were discussed. No valley led down from the great table-land, one of the largest in the Apennines. It lay, entirely separated from the adjacent valleys, two thousand feet above the sea at the level of the lake. But beyond the mountains, some three or four miles to the west, ran the river Liris, parallel for a short distance, a clear, dashing stream hurrying down from the mountains and by more leisurely turnings upon the plains finding its way to its outlet south of Rome. Between lay Monte Salviano, rearing its head a thousand feet above, and also another plain, lying at an altitude above that of the Fucino basin. To pierce this distance with a tunnel, to carry it through hard, compact calcareous rock, with the primitive pick and chisel and with none of our modern aids of machinery, steam, blasting-powder or air-pumps: this was the daring project of the first century, and an engineer was found equal to the planning of the necessary details. Unfortunately his name and identity have perished, and it is only too evident that he was not allowed to carry out his own plans.

Alas! that we cannot associate pastoral innocence and simplicity with the proceedings of those early times. Corruption and favoritism seem to have been almost as rife in the infancy of our era as they are to-day. To the Emperor's favorite and secretary, Narcissus, the Greek freedman, was intrusted the carrying out of the plan. The minor requirements of knowledge of the work or fitness for it were not insisted upon, for Narcissus possessed the one most important, then as now—influence. The Emperor doted upon him, confided in him and was completely unaware that Narcissus was false and unworthy, the confederate of the young Empress Messalina, that creature of beauty and fascination whose qualities enabled

her to make her name a by-word of infamy for all time before her career was closed at the hands of this very Narcissus at the age of twenty-three. History does not tell how much of his leisure Narcissus gave to the superintendence of the excavations, but they went on for eleven years, during which time thirty thousand men were employed; and in its construction, besides the excavation of the tunnel itself, some forty vertical wells and oblique galleries were opened for the admission of air and the removal of rubbish. It was the most gigantic undertaking ever known until the modern one of the Mont Cenis tunnel. As at his death the property of Narcissus amounted to more than fifteen millions, he at least made the work profitable, nor is it surprising to know that it was ill done.

At length the day came when the emissarius was ready to be opened. It was to be marked by one of those glorious Roman holidays whose annals drip with blood; it was to be celebrated by a grand naval contest upon the lake before its waters received the indignity of being lowered by the hand of man; and the Marsi were somewhat comforted to contemplate the copious libation to be poured out to their deities, whose just wrath would undoubtedly be excited by this sacrilegious interference. Trees were felled in the mountains and conveyed to the shore, where two fleets of triremes were constructed; and when the preparations were completed, up from Rome came the imperial cavalcade, and Claudius with his new Empress Agrippina and her young son Nero were lodged in the sumptuous pavilions prepared for them. Crowds of Romans and throngs of the people of the whole country-side gathered to the spot, and when the time came and Claudius was seated upon his raised throne, with Agrippina superbly dressed in a military habit of cloth-of-gold beside him, past them marched the nineteen thousand prisoners

whose slaughter was to form the enjoyment of the hour. "Ave Cæsar, we who are about to die salute you," was pronounced as the condemned heads bowed before the throne, and the forgetful Emperor, whose good-natured absent-mindedness frequently ordered the execution of a man one day and sent him an invitation to supper on the next, politely responded "Avete vos." Quick looks passed between the doomed men; hope lightened their steps as they passed on. The Emperor had wished them *health*, it was evident that he absolved them from death; there was, then, to be a parade but no battle, and in the general joy their lives were to be spared.

The ships were drawn up in order, the rowers at the banks of oars; the shore was lined with prætorian guards. At the Emperor's sign a silver Triton sprang from the water between the fleets, the signal of battle. The throng waited but the ships lay motionless. Moments went by, discontented murmurs rose. The Emperor angrily sprang to his feet, and messengers ran hurriedly to and fro.

"What is wrong?"

"Oh, simply those poor fools fancy we are not in earnest!"

"Death and destruction! are we to be balked of our pleasure thus? Let the combat begin, let it rage hotly, or by all the gods, turn on the catapults and sink the fleets with every soul on board!"

Tacitus tells us that thus encouraged they bore themselves gallantly. It was better to die in the heat of conflict than to meet a fate as certain and more ignoble. They fought till the decks were slippery, till the waters of Lake Fucino were red with blood and the most eager spectator was filled with delight. Not till then was the slaughter stopped and those left alive permitted to stay their hands.

After this came the hour for opening the flood-gates at the mouth of the tunnel. In a loud voice word was given, but alas! instead of a great sensation, a burst of rushing waters, hardly more than a feeble trickle, answered the anticipations of the spectators and the vain confidence of Narcissus. The brow of the Emperor, whose temper was already uncertain since the inauspicious beginning of the entertainment, clouded heavily. Agrippina, the determined enemy of Narcissus, saw her opportunity, and, rejoicing in the advantage it offered her, loudly charged the favorite with greed and peculation, and of insult to the Emperor in this pretended costly preparation and complete failure. Well might Narcissus tremblingly realize that in this moment his very life hung by a thread, and with difficulty did his anxious explanations and beseechings procure him a respite of a few days for repairing the error made in the mouth of the tunnel, not excavated to a sufficient depth. Fortunately preparations had been made for a stay of several days; places for shelter and for amusement had been built, and Narcissus distractedly divided himself between urging on the revels and banquetings upon the shore, while day and night he spurred the toil upon the further excavations. The channel was deepened, a reservoir prepared to receive the first rush of the waters, and over it a gorgeous pavilion was erected, in which the imperial party might enjoy the sight while partaking of a tempting feast. Narcissus declared that all was ready.

The ceremonies opened with a gladiatorial combat, only less sanguinary than the naval battle and perhaps even more enjoyable, since the gory details could be watched at closer range. Then came the second trial, and this time Narcissus had succeeded only too well. The released water dashed foaming into the reservoir, and, washing away the supports of the pavilion, nearly

drowned Claudius and his whole court. Agrippina now felt that her hour of vengeance had come. With well-feigned fury she poured accusations upon Narcissus. She called gods and men to witness that his infamous attempt was to slay the Emperor and it had all but succeeded. She adjured her husband not to expose his sacred person to the menacing presence of such a wretch. What fate did he deserve milder than that of instant execution? And Narcissus, barely escaping her frenzied demands for his death, was fortunate to be allowed to go into banishment,—fortunate for the moment, but there was a thoroughness about Agrippina's management of her affairs that left nothing half finished. Narcissus alive was a possible cause of danger. The Emperor was foolish and doting. He was forgetful and would forgive. She waited only a short time before sending a trusted lieutenant to quietly murder Narcissus and thus put him beyond the power of creating further embarrassment.

It is hardly to be wondered at that serious errors had been committed in the construction of the great emissarius, and it was not long before it was choked up. Claudius made some attempts to repair it, but he died two years later and nothing further was done in the matter. In the Middle Ages the ever-present trouble with the lake induced Frederick II to try to reopen it, but such a thing was far beyond the skill of that epoch. After 1783 the lake became even more threatening, in the next twenty years rising thirty feet, but it was not till another forty years had passed that the government was induced to take the matter in hand. A grant of all the land uncovered in the draining of the lake was to be bestowed on the person or persons who undertook it, and in the end the person was realized in Prince Torlonia.

His plan was a scheme of a very thorough kind. The first gallery had been intended to regulate the level

of the lake; the second aimed at nothing less than the complete draining of the basin. Such a design would surely have turned dizzy any one but the owner of a steady head and an almost bottomless purse, but Prince Alessandro Torlonia was possessed of both, and in 1854 the work began. Almost insurmountable difficulties were encountered, but year after year the work went on, not pausing even when the din of battle almost reached the mountain valley. The ancient emissarius was to be used as far as possible, and for four miles a capacious tunnel was to be carried through the mountains. But such changes had taken place during the centuries,— the infiltration of water had so altered the interior and made dangerous the work,—that it seemed sometimes well nigh impossible. Every foot of the way, however, was carefully engineered and completely finished; where the tunnel did not pass through solid rock, smoothly and perfectly bored, it was made to pass through magnificent masonry of cut stone.

During these years the peasants were fond of indulging in a jest often repeated—"Either Torlonia will drain the lake, or the lake will drain Torlonia." But at last the great work was accomplished, another festival took place, another opening of the flood-gates, and in August, 1862, the lake was again unchained. The result was a complete success. A stream, perfectly controlled, began to flow forth into the Liris, and so to the Mediterranean, and the apprehensions of those dwellers on the river banks who had feared flood and disaster from the releasing of such a mighty body of water were set at rest.

Not quite so connectedly as this did the sequence of events pass through our minds as we loitered upon the roof that morning, but enthusiasm waxed till we were eager to proceed with our explorations. Arriving

again at the garden gate we mounted a humble little vehicle, and, armed with a permit to see as much of the estate as we would, drove off toward the south. From the piazza we passed to the streets of the town and skirted its mediæval castle, whose battlements no longer rise to cover warriors prepared to defend it against assailing enemies; the walls are now pierced for modern windows that let in air and sunshine, and within goes on the busy life of the public school. With a sigh over the romantic past, dutifully cut short by a realization of the needs of the present, we left it behind us and emerged upon the open country, flat and cultivated. At a short distance from the village we came to a stone pillar, indicating the ancient margin of the lake and consequently the beginning of the estate saved from its waters. There was no break here,— no apparent difference of level,— and we trotted on. A little further and we entered a gate and approached one of a group of buildings, a huge barn, substantially reared, with no wood in its construction, solidly pillared, apparently intended to last for ages; and within stood row after row of sleek white cattle, perfectly housed, exquisitely kept, each one a picture. The pretty, docile things made friends with us at once, and their big, dark eyes and intelligent faces seemed to give each a personality of its own. A long row of two-year-old heifers was especially charming. They glanced at us, we thought, with a kind of welcoming curiosity, and allowed us to pet them and stroke their snowy sides without the least shyness. An incredible number appeared to be sheltered here, and yet so perfect was the cleanliness everywhere that it was a pleasure to linger among them.

Outside, in smaller buildings, more open to the sun, were the fathers of the herd. It seemed to us that we had never seen anything so big before excepting an

elephant! The attendants stirred one of them up, who was stretched out upon his clean straw, and with a mighty heave he brought his gigantic bulk up to a standing posture; surely it must be the most prodigious breed of cattle in the world! The magnificent fellow gazed at us with a fine scorn, as it seemed to us, though not impatiently, as who should say, "Why is my meditative leisure thus disturbed by the pert curiosity of two petticoated beings of such small consequence?" We felt impelled to treat him with a more circumspect reserve than his companions, with whom we had just been so familiar, and did not venture to pat his vast flanks, though perhaps he might have permitted it. There can hardly be a prettier sight than the oxen of this breed, as one meets them drawing the loaded carts between these mountain villages. Fancy a load of artichokes of the magnitude of a load of hay, the fresh green contrasting with the snowy sides of the oxen and the fringes of gay scarlet tassels that adorn their heads.

This was but one stable of I know not how many devoted to cattle, and those containing the horses numbered many more. On we drove through fenced fields till, in the distance, we could discern a tall figure rising upward into the clear sunlight like a tower. It was a colossal statue of the Virgin, of glistening white marble, standing just above the great lock where the waters from the long canal descend into the tunnel. Year after year she stands there, gazing southward over these stretches of fertile valley rescued from lake and swamp. From a balustraded terrace below her pedestal one can look for miles up the unswerving line of the canal, bordered on either side by a wall of poplars, as it conveys the winter rainfall from the centre of the original lake into this main waterway.

A subdued roar seems to pervade the air when one has reached the grounds surrounding the lock, and it grows louder as one enters the small building just behind the terrace. Without and within it is of stone, substantial, plain, marred by no ugly makeshifts nor tasteless attempts at decoration. In the vestibule stands a bust of Prince Torlonia. We began to descend the narrow spiral stairs that led down, down, into bottomless depths as it appeared to us, while the roar of many waters grew more and more deafening and we felt as though the sea had closed over our heads. At the foot we could look through a loophole and see the foaming, boiling volume of water as it found the bottom of the tunnel. It was almost terrifying; man with his puny strength seemed impotent to control and direct a force so mighty.

It is impossible to sum up in bare figures the results of this remarkable experiment. For twenty-two years, while the work went on, two thousand men more or less were kept continuously employed and one of the benefits of this steady and well-paid labor was the reform of the whole locality. When for years the pest of brigandage was ever present in regions even less removed from the large cities, there was none here. The men confidently labored on even when in troublous times they were obliged to wait months together for their wages which could not be sent up from Rome. Of course there are those who mourn the disappearance of the lovely sheet of water, but in what was formerly a poisonous miasmatic territory a healthy, laborious agricultural people occupy its place. Thirty-six thousand acres of ground are divided into farms, each with its comfortable house and convenient outbuildings, and the tenants of Prince Torlonia till the soil. There are good schools for the children and there are many miles of excellent roads.

One may easily ask, "But with the expenditure of so much money, could not a productive estate have been established elsewhere with less labor?" There is little doubt that it could have been, but we know that Italy is not a large, sparsely settled country with much land still unoccupied, productive if inaccessible. That a large region should be reclaimed from conditions that made life precarious and difficult and restored to order, industry and comfort, is a gain hardly to be measured, and possibly it could never have been accomplished but through the willingness, the ability and the wealth of a man ready single-handed to undertake it. One is reminded of the closing of Faust, the only satisfying answer to his questionings found in practical work for the help and betterment of humanity; a work described as quite resembling this of Prince Torlonia, laboring to bring into being against unfavoring conditions of nature the possibility of homes filled with an intelligent, industrious, happy people.

ROMAN EXCURSIONS

"Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I trace
What here was once a shrine and holy place
Of the supernal Beauty."

—LOWELL. *Si discendero.*

THE old papal city of Anagni lies among the mountains which sweep down on either hand in long curves or more abrupt falls to the valley which the railway follows between Rome and Naples. The guide-book has little to say of it nor could we find any one who was familiar with it, but we were determined to pay it the homage of a visit and so left Rome early one sunny morning for the thirty miles' journey which carries one to the station. To the station but not to the town, for while Anagni and its opposite neighbors sit aloof upon the heights, their little stations lie some miles below bordering the railway. On alighting from the train, the only travelers seeking Anagni, the solitary station looked as though even the customary diligence might be absent, but on passing through the gate and round to the back of the building we found it standing there, together with one battered little carriage. An open vehicle, no matter how humble, has great advantages over the best closed diligence and our preference becoming apparent, the

diligence driver made the most strenuous efforts to gather us in. The carriage, however, finally bore us off after we had made a bargain with its *vetturino*.

I may mention here that it is never best to leave any loopholes in the terms of such a transaction. Our man was an innocent pastoral-looking son of the soil, with whom it was not difficult to come to an understanding, and yet at the end of the day he tried to overreach us most shamelessly. This roused our indignation and a long discussion followed. I reasoned, he insisted, I explained and reminded, he stubbornly reiterated his unjust demands. Patience at last becoming exhausted, I flatly refused to be defrauded, and left him clamoring for more. Yet the moment that he saw the matter was quite concluded, and before we had disappeared round the corner of the station, he cheerfully and cordially shouted after us:

"A pleasant journey to the Signore! Have the goodness to employ me again another time!"

We meanwhile, hurrying out of sight, lapsed into helpless laughter.

But to return to our arrival. To wind through dewy fields and inhale the perfume of clover, with which the air was loaded, was pure pleasure, while wild flowers of the gayest colors made a carpet all about us. One never quite gets over the surprise of finding so many things growing wild that are cultivated at home, as for instance, honeysuckle, pansies, periwinkles, yellow iris, scarlet poppies, cowslips, pink morning-glories, blue corn-flowers, wallflowers and stocks. Particularly happy and light-hearted in the midst of all this fragrance and color, we mounted higher and higher, coming at length to the city gate through which we passed in an instant from the youthful beauty of the Italian spring to the sombre frowns of mediæval age. The abruptness of this

transition is always more or less startling. A village in another land may melt imperceptibly into the world without, straggling off toward the open country with scattered houses at longer and longer intervals. Not so with Anagni and other towns of its age. Without may be unbroken fields, but once past the massive gateway, and solid impervious walls stand shoulder to shoulder everywhere, with climbing tortuous streets and dark arched passageways. These streets, where no width is wasted, are paved from wall to wall with heavy blocks of stone, no distinction of sidewalk being made, for foot-passengers' rights are always regarded as secondary. We went on to the Inn of the Cock, where we alighted to order luncheon and deposit part of our belongings while we went on foot to explore. The landlady, a handsome, haughty-looking dame, with long, heavy gold ear-rings, took charge of what we left and consented to have *bistecca* and fried artichokes, with bread and wine, prepared for us at the hour of one.

Not far from the door of the inn as we passed up the street we came upon a bit of architecture so striking and beautiful that we stopped to ask about it and found, as we hoped, that it had belonged to the papal palace. Once the palace and cathedral with the gardens between extended half across the little city, though to-day other buildings intervene, and before these very walls was enacted that sacrilegious tragedy that filled the Christian world with horror six hundred years ago. Now a pretty girl with the snowy head-dress of the *contadina* sat tranquilly sewing on the threshold that must have witnessed the beginning of the story whose close is so obscured in the misty background of history that no one can read it quite clearly.

Dante, whose reverence for the church never bridled his indignation at wickedness in her high places, more

than hints that Pope Boniface VIII, the protagonist of this drama, might justly take his place upside down in one of those seething pot-holes of hell which he describes, in the company of an earlier pope whom he had already planted there. At all events there can be no doubt that for what occurred on that long ago September morning there had been more or less provocation.

The Pope and the Cardinals assembled in council about him were suddenly aware of the trampling of horses and the gathering roar of threatening voices as the terrible Colonna, maddened by the spoliation and exile of his whole family, swept through the streets of Anagni surrounded by his followers, shouting "Death to the Pope!" and roused the treacherous and rebellious townspeople to join them in thundering at the palace gates. Panic seized all but Boniface himself, the wealthy old pontiff who had been so proud and so cruel. What were his feelings as with a few followers he barred the doors and tried to temporize? His sanctity was ignored, his authority derided, his commands defied. Moment by moment his adherents fell away from him till he was deserted even by the Cardinals who had been his closest friends. Alone, then, but unbroken he left the palace and passed through his gardens to the cathedral. There he took his seat upon the papal throne, clothed in his richest robes and with the triple crown upon his head. The merchants of Anagni had tremblingly crowded in with their precious wares for sanctuary in the sacred building and the light from its windows now fell upon a spectacle awful in its strangeness. Heaps of costly fabrics cumbered the pavement and among them cowered quaking figures and pallid faces, in terror for life and limb as well as for worldly possessions. And as the huddled groups shrank and trembled at each renewed onslaught of the besiegers, ever battering more furiously at the doors, the stern figure of the Pope, fixed

Anagni. The Papal Palace.

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and immovable, towered above them all, silently waiting. At length the doors crashed in and the assailants poured through the opening.

They threatened the Holy Father, they showered insult upon him, they almost killed him, but he would make no promises. Then they set him upon a worthless horse with his face to the tail and so they bore him to prison—the haughty prelate who had ridden crowned with jewels to the most magnificent inauguration ever accorded to a pope, while kings held his bridle-rein on either hand and the train could hardly cleave its way through the kneeling multitudes of Rome. Then both palace and cathedral were plundered. No merchant who had taken refuge there, it is written, saved so much as a farthing and as for the wealth of the palace, the incomes of all the kings of Europe for a year would not cover the riches carried away that day by the soldiers. Not the smallest thing was left, the bare walls alone remained. When outrage had done its worst, a few days later the townsfolk rose, drove out the soldiers and set the Pope free but he did not survive it many days. No one knows whether in bitterness and mortification he put an end to his own life or whether the violence, starvation and exhaustion of those days were too much for him and he died.

The cathedral that beheld these things yet stands there, solid and imperturbable. On the outside of the western wall, high up under a marble canopy, sits the statue of Boniface, still smilingly stretching forth his hands in blessing!

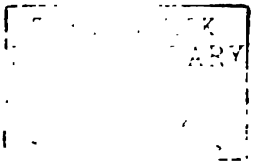
We entered the church, which has been much restored, but did not linger long. A bit here and there of great age is shown and there are fragments precious to the student of mosaics. In the crypt, too, there are some curiously primitive frescoes, but there was more charm

out of doors. The ancient blackened buildings look as though they had never seen the hand of the repairer in all these centuries, and though I grudge to confess it, Anagni is undeniably dirty. Still, what of that! There is infinite picturesqueness everywhere, there are incomparable views from all its high terraces, there are segments of its formidable old Roman walls supported by prodigious arches where upon one side the town stops short and there is a sudden steep plunge to its vegetable gardens below. A number of officious little boys were confident that we needed their help to see these remains and hopped cheerfully about us, stopping to play when we paused and renewing their offers of assistance whenever we resumed our stroll. There were also the most picturesque old women, seated outside their doors spinning while they minded their grandchildren, whose mothers were away at work. Two of them in particular proved irresistible to our photographer, so we began a conversation with them and explained the wishes of the Signorina.

"Oh, but we are too old!" they cried. "The Signorina surely cannot wish to make a picture of us. We are ugly, and then we have no fine clothes!"

We assured them to the contrary and in gratified embarrassment they consented to be posed, while the flock of babies hovered just out of range of the camera, and one whom I approached too nearly at the close of operations burst into such prolonged screams of affright as to show that a tourist took on the appearance of a terrifying monster in its unaccustomed eyes. In general, however, we found the dwellers in Anagni not ill-disposed toward us and once when in the main thoroughfare, which was yet a narrow and uncrowded street enough, we found ourselves somewhat pressed upon by a too numerous following of children, only a word was necessary to be

Anagni. A Street.



relieved. A passing remark to a man standing in a doorway sufficed.

"We appear to be heading a procession in your town, and we are a little incommoded," said I, and the children must have been quietly but firmly dealt with at once, for, to our surprise, the little mob melted away directly. And if it re-formed more than once in smaller numbers later, why, we had grown accustomed to our own attractiveness and perhaps should have missed the homage of this form of attention had it entirely ceased. At all events, we quitted Anagni as evening came on with only friendly feeling for its inhabitants and with regretful admiration for all the beauty we were leaving behind.

BRACCIANO.

"Do not fail to see some of the finest of the Roman castles," said a Florentine friend to us, and remembering this charge we early chose Bracciano for an excursion from Rome. To enter the castle a permit is necessary, which is to be procured at the palace of Prince Odescalchi, the present owner, and on alighting at the portal to apply for it we were met by an angel with a flaming sword, or at least a being nearly as overawing. He had evidently been chosen for his height, his magnificent proportions and his bland manner. He wore a long coat or robe, nearly sweeping the ground, a cocked hat adorned with silver lace, and bore in his hand a staff or wand some six feet in length, also ornamented and bound about with silver. It was his business merely to wave the inquiring traveler to the secretary's office opening upon the court, and to offer such an official anything short of a purse of gold or a jewel of price as *buonamano* made us tremble lest we should be convicted of ignorance or insult. This fear, however, was groundless, for the

elegant impersonality of his demeanor as he accepted a coin of moderate value reached the standard of his other perfections.

By train it is but twenty-four miles to Bracciano, and once there we found our way to the Trattoria Sabatio, a comfortable and well-appointed restaurant, where we lunched upon the veranda, having the castle in full view only a short distance away. The huge pile built by the Orsini in the fifteenth century dominates the village with a masterful air, admirably in keeping with its character of mighty mediæval stronghold. Its great height and extent, its towers and bastions in perfect preservation and the beauty of its commanding situation make it a fine example of its class. Contemplating it, vague memories and curious conjectures flit through the mind. The Orsini — potent and wonderful race — their power so commanding, even centuries before the building of this castle, that they were said to own four hundred black towers in the city of Rome, their bloody struggles with the great rival family of Colonna, their annals thrilling with romance, stained with crime — how one longs to penetrate the obscurity of the past and become possessed of the details of those broken, tantalizing records!

ORSINI ARMS.

At present the interior of the edifice is in process of restoration. I am not sure whether I should choose to restore, were I to come into possession of a storied castle. An arrested decay, a preservation of the remains without adding or subtracting, would have its attraction; but at Bracciano it appears at least to be carried on with

care and reverence, and it is interesting to see that where a bit of decoration on wall or ceiling has escaped the destructive influence of time and chance, it is scrupulously copied and developed in the present design. In work of this kind there are discoveries to be made, too, and here, in the removal of part of a wall, an interesting fresco has been brought to light fresh and uninjured. It covers a large space under an arch leading into the fine court and is now protected by glass, that the open air may not impair its color. We walked through the rooms shown to us, looking at the books and pictures they contained, but especially at a marble bust standing in the full light of a window which overlooked the pretty lake below the castle walls. It represented a woman of full, ripe beauty, no less a personage than that unhappy Isabella Orsini, done to death by her husband in a burst of righteous indignation over those frailties which first became unendurable to him when he had fallen under the spell of a more youthful beauty.

Those were the days when the patriarchal system, with its affectionate family councils, settled questions which a cold and unsympathetic judiciary now deals with, and if it became necessary to proceed to the cutting off of life itself, it might be gently but firmly accomplished without evoking impertinent comment or the embarrassment of prying investigation. One sentence in particular at the close of the discussion which decided the end of poor Isabella's story has come down to us. Her husband and her brother, in the interest of family dignity and the furtherance of the proprieties in general, reluctantly decided that she had better be removed, and as they separated at the end of the interview it was the brother who, with a pressure of Duke Paolo's hand, observed tenderly:

"Remember to be a Christian and a gentleman."

The apparent ambiguity of this exhortation was not misunderstood by his listener, though it does not appear that the Duke was in special need of warning lest a spirit of fond indulgence should interfere with the claims of justice. From this very castle he took her when he had arranged the details of the affair, which he carried out with the considerateness demanded by a matter so purely private and personal.

Perhaps from the same window which now lights the untroubled marble countenance of her bust, she paused to gaze for a moment the day she departed, and the surface of the lake lay as blue and sparkling as to-day, the hills with their groups of trees as green and tranquil, the sedges at the water's edge as fresh and waving. Did any creeping terror invade her, or had she not yet divined the purpose of her journey? And is it true that Duke Paolo disguised his intent till the very moment that with his own hand he strangled her in the dark chamber whither he had led her? No one can be sure now, but at least he gave her a costly and magnificent funeral and followed her to the grave as chief mourner, while her brother, not to be outdone in magnanimity, paid all her debts, which amounted to no small sum, and was at some expense besides in favors to members of her family. It is impossible to guess how many other bloody tragedies have had their climax within these walls, but it is easy to imagine any horror, for what moral perversion may not be looked for in the possibilities of such a heredity? These fiery natures, unencumbered by scruples, hesitated at little in the accomplishment of their purposes. Perhaps, however, the spectral shapes that must have paced these galleries at night will shrink away before the stone-mason and the frescoer and Bracciano be no longer revisited by the shades that must have haunted it till now.

When the shadows begin to lengthen, it is pleasant to drive on the banks of the lake, at least as far as the little town of Trevignano which, half way round the nearly circular basin, looks across the water toward Bracciano. Its houses are grouped about and upon a small rounded hill that rises close to the water's edge and mounts so symmetrically to support the ruined castle on its summit, that one is half inclined to suspect the Orsini of having planned and constructed it simply to act as an attractive point in the view from their windows. Whether it be so or not, it is as well not to examine the little place too much in detail, for though fair to outward view it is singularly unclean within. The inhabitants, however, are busily engaged in weaving linen, which when produced is as fair and unsullied as though it had not been brought forth in the grime and dirt of Trevignano. Webs of it are spread upon the beach where, stretched tightly and fastened to the ground, it lies bleaching and forms dazzling parallelograms of whiteness which can be seen from a long distance, and as an unusual feature of scenery puzzle the unaccustomed eye.

At twilight as we stood upon the platform of the railway station, ready to return to Rome, we noticed that we were to have the company of a newly married pair, who were perhaps about to make their first adventurous journey into the wide world beyond Bracciano. The little bride had added a pair of pearl-colored gloves to her rustic finery. Her eyelashes lifted themselves only momentarily from her blushing cheeks as her husband, fairly radiating pride and delight in his recently acquired honors, invited the chaffing congratulations of his friends and gloried in the importance of the occasion. Her happy embarrassment added piquancy to the usual interchange of pleasantries, whose character showed that the

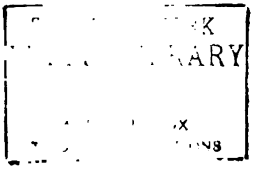
wit of bridal parties does not differ greatly in whatever language it may be exercised.

VITERBO.

Viterbo is within easy reach of Rome, and it will well repay any one who can spare the time to spend a day or two there. It is curious and individual even in a country of such infinite variety as Italy, where every place has its own separate and peculiar charm, and it has many claims to interest. For instance, it lies at the heart of the "patrimony of St. Peter," that rich grant made by the great Countess Matilda to the papacy in the twelfth century, and its situation, about twelve hundred feet above the sea, in a rolling country of low hills and shallow valleys, is exceedingly pleasing. It is full of picturesque bits and delightful architectural details, while the drives in the neighborhood lead by quiet roads to interesting points beyond.

Italian authors of old time call it "the city of beautiful fountains and handsome women." Nothing that we saw would have suggested to us that the standard of good looks was higher there than in neighboring places, but it may have been merely that the beauties of Viterbo did not happen to walk abroad during our short stay; however, neither did anything occur to illustrate another characteristic maintained of Viterbo — that it has an unusually wicked population. Noisy they did indeed appear to be and voluble to a degree, but no indecorum or violence made itself noticeable while we were its guests. Our windows overlooked the irregular main piazza of the town and from it an ever-ascending volume of sound rose to us. At first we rested ourselves from the journey and gazed down, but presently we descended and took haphazard ventures into the nearer streets.

Bracciano. The Castle.



It seemed a busy place, with much coming and going, and quite an array of shops for the sale of different wares, and if one were unreasonable enough to carp at anything in Italy it might be at the contents of such shops. For instance, after feasting your eyes upon the upper portion of the exterior of some quaint building you become aware of windows upon the street belonging to a *botega*, and still with a preoccupied mind vaguely imagining the sort of implements and utensils which would be the harmonious furnishing of such an ancient habitation, you glance at the array in the little show window. Alas, for romance! Just such meretricious and tasteless frippery, just such cheap and commonplace tinware and crockery meet the eye as fill the shelves of "the store" in an American country town. Perhaps this homogeneity is a part of progress, perhaps households which had to limit themselves to a few beautiful hand-wrought copper vessels now luxuriate in the convenience of unlimited tin buckets; but surely there can be no doubt that the substitution of bad imitations of our modern fashions for the suitable and beautiful national costumes once worn is a misfortune to wearers and beholders alike.

In Italian towns of any size one familiar American object, one revered name, is ever present, the Singer Sewing Machine. How it is that this make occupies the field alone I cannot explain, but so it appears to be, and what is still more singular it can be had much more cheaply than in the United States. In Viterbo the agency was combined with the sale of photographs of local scenery, and as we chose a few of these I remarked to the woman in attendance:

"I suppose this machine is much prized in Italy. What is it called?"

"Oh, yes," she replied readily, "truly most useful, Signora; it is a Seenjery!"

From the centre of business it is easy to pass to some silent little piazza, where the sun and shade distribute themselves tranquilly upon weather-stained surfaces of gray stone, where close clinging lichens add soft new tones to their coloring, and in whose crevices tender sprouting plants have found a foothold. Perhaps at the jutting angle of a building a column rears itself supporting the sculptured arms of the city, or a fearful stone monster looks down, shorn of much of its first fierceness by the smoothing hand of time. A pot of clove-pinks rests upon a high window-ledge, or a canary pipes from its cage with no loss of cheerfulness for the lack of listeners.

The churches are many and interesting, and we noticed jutting from the façade of little Saint Angelo a curiously carved sarcophagus and learned on inquiry that within it undoubtedly rests the dust of the beautiful Galiana of the Baracozzi, that cherished heroine of Viterbo, about whom the romance of the city gathers. The chroniclers of the twelfth century are agreed that Viterbo was favored beyond the ordinary. They record its possession of treasures as choice and diverse, as, for example, a portable altar which carried victory with it wherever it might be transferred and set up; a jester of irresistible wit and diabolical invention; a lady half of whose hair was red and half green; but especially do they dwell upon the matchless beauty of the fair Galiana. They are eloquent over the variety of her charms, of which perhaps the most unusual was the possession of a complexion of such wondrous purity that when she drank red wine its passage down her slender throat showed rosy through the transparent skin. Her story is related something as follows: The founders of Viterbo, having been Trojans, the city still reverently supported in honor of its origin a white sow, and this beast, grown

to a fearful size and arrogance, had sacrificed to its dreadful appetite every year on Easter Sunday a virgin drawn by lot from the fairest the city contained.

When the young and lovely Galiana had reached what seemed the culminating point of her bloom the dreaded lot fell upon her. At this all the population fell to lamenting grievously. It was too dreadful that beauty so dazzling must be given over to serve as a repast for the odious monster. However, there was no escape, and amid sighs and groans she was conveyed to the banks of the river Paradosso, where the sacrifices were wont to take place. But at the very moment the voracious sow approached to devour her prey, out from the forest close by bounded a lion which forthwith fell upon the sow, killed it and dragged its body away, thus liberating the virgin from death and the people from their bloody annual tribute. Great was the relief, tumultuous the joy of all Viterbo, and Galiana was borne back in triumph to her home.

From this time forth she waxed, if possible, more beautiful than ever, and her fame reached so far that travelers came from the remotest countries to gaze upon her. On her account a war was even kindled with Rome, in which the prowess of Viterbo at last won the victory; and indeed toward the close of the narrative details multiply themselves in such a way as to become confusing, for while one version tamely chronicles that Galiana died quietly in her bed, another has it that a Roman baron, having sued for her hand in marriage and been refused, decided to have her by force. With a numerous army he besieged Viterbo and succeeded in surrounding the tower of the Baracozzi. When it became impossible for the father longer to hold out, sooner than allow his daughter to fall a prey to the enemy, he killed her and cast her body forth to them from a circular window which

is still to be seen in the tower. Another account asserts that the baron, finding it impossible to take the tower by storm, begged that at least before departing he might be granted a sight of her, the which being considered an allowable indulgence, she was shown him from this same round window. At this, filled with fury and despair at the sight of such unattainable loveliness, he suddenly took aim at her with his bow and pierced her to the heart.

Profound were the horror and grief of the people, and the mortal remains of this firebrand of beauty having been duly exposed in public for a last look at the perfection that had cost so dear, were interred in a sarcophagus upon which was sculptured the story of the lion and the sow. This was then fastened aloft upon the façade of the church of Saint Angelo, where it may still be seen. If cavillers object that the coffin is Etruscan and that the tower of the Baracozzi was not built till the fourteenth century, let us regard them with indulgent pity; there will ever be frigid, inelastic minds ready to brush aside the most enchanting romance if it clashes with a bald, unsympathetic fact.

Etruscan remains of great interest and importance abound in this region, which lies well within the borders of that ancient people, and even to one who does not take fire easily at the mention of Etruscan tombs the afternoon's drive to Castel d'Asso may well prove a satisfying and delightful experience. In the first place the Roman roads that seam the ground immediately beyond Viterbo upon the west are more curious and wonderful than any others that I know of. Imagine a tunnel cut in a closely packed gravelly soil of rich color, with the roof left off. Let centuries make the sides somewhat irregular without lowering them, cover the upper edges with every variety of shrub and tree, of drooping, trailing, waving greenery,

tossing down long arms toward you as you drive along below, and you may have some idea of these shady and delectable highways. They have the effect of having perhaps begun upon the surface and then worn their way fifteen or twenty feet into the soil. Through them we passed for some miles and then emerged gradually upon informal tracks among ploughed fields and grassy meadows.

We were made aware of having reached the neighborhood of the famous Etruscan burying-place, when the road came to an end suddenly in the yard of a farmhouse, where our driver explained to us a guide would soon be forthcoming. He emerged presently from a field near by, for conducting strangers to the tombs of Castel d'Asso is probably an incidental occupation to the more regular one of cultivating the soil. We followed him on foot, and nothing can be less suggestive of funereal solemnity than the little path that meanders along at first nearly upon a level and then suddenly drops over the brink of something between a narrow valley and a wide ravine, at the bottom of which runs a brook. Confronting us as we began to descend was the ruined castle which gives its name to the locality, retaining something of its old outline but abandoned long since to solitude and decay. Whether one follows a guide or picks one's own way among the shrubby, flowering verdure of the descent seems to make little difference, and at the bottom the most insecure and slippery of little bridges offers a passage across the brook. With the help of the guide's hand and a cautious avoidance of bog on the opposite bank we sprang over and a little later suddenly came upon the first evidences of the tombs.

Forming the upper part of the valley's wall on this side are spaces of perpendicular rock and horizontally along the surface run lines of carving. The simple

severity of these mouldings cut into the face of the living rock has an impressiveness denied to any artificially erected monument. Below panels are indicated, in shape pyramidal, almost suggesting Egyptian forms, and one may trace mysterious Etruscan characters not yet obliterated.

Solemn, immovable they stand, emerging from the loving embrace of ever renewed, tender green leaves and seeming to gaze impassively forward, brooding over an immemorial past.

Below, here and there are unimportant-looking holes in the ground, choked with earth and bushes and appearing hardly more than the burrows of some animal. One might descend into them with difficulty, but our attendant promised little now to reward such an attempt. Ages ago they were plundered of their bronze tripods, their painted vases, their scarabs and golden ornaments. So without reluctance we contented ourselves with the exterior, remembering the Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani, whose conscience never quite ceased to reproach him for having broken in upon the long sleep of a Lucumo and disclosed to the eyes of vulgar curiosity the sacredness of his seclusion.

Turning out of Viterbo in the opposite direction from Castel d'Asso, one may go to the Villa Lante, one of the most beautiful and characteristic in Italy, a real creation such as taste and wealth have known how to evoke without the aid of great natural advantage of site or surroundings. It is a thing to make one long to know of its beginning and whether it was conceived and carried out by one person or discussed and planned by several. At all events there is complete unity of purpose evident in it as a whole, to which its details are finely subordinated. It is not a long drive to the little village of Bagnaia, and as you enter its open sunny piazza the

warlike towers of the fortress on one side overlook the slope of the villla gardens not far away on the other.

The property was once the seat of the bishops of Viterbo but now belongs to the Duca di Lante, who it is to be hoped holds it the fairest jewel in the ducal coronet. The gardens at first level later mount a gentle incline, the entrance being at the lowest point, and as you enter the gate in the enclosing stone wall you may take in the design at a glance. First, the formal garden, perhaps three hundred feet square, with a superb fountain as its central point, and beyond four rises of terrace. At the first, opposite the entrance and against the outer edges of the formal garden, stand two square stone pavilions, the summer residence, while between them the ground begins to mount to the upper terraces; beyond all is a background of woods.

The fountain, fine in design, with its bronze figures, stone balustrades and copings, and great terra-cotta jars of growing plants, sends its waters into four connecting basins, the whole occupying a space something like a hundred feet square. Around it the garden beds, not overloaded with flowers, all the plants kept to a certain measure of height, group themselves in geometrical designs, and the boundaries are marked by flourishing box hedges of dense growth. The upper terraces are a series of lesser fountains, waterways, flights of steps and balustrades with such a disposition of hedges, shrubs and trees as leaves the vista open to the eye and yet gives shade and the shelter of arching boughs. Now and then a stone pine sends its slender column aloft topped by the sudden spread of its crown of branches, beautiful accent in a beautiful scheme.

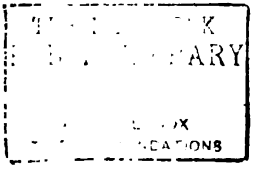
As one follows up the terraces by flights of steps, receding from and returning to the central attraction of the water's course, each step is a discovery. The stone

used everywhere is porous, almost coral-like, and time and the lapping tongues of water have moulded and worn it into fantastic irregularities, while all the delicate vegetation that seeks a foothold in such places finds ample hospitality in its crannies and crevices. Old Neptune reclining in one of the smaller basins wears a most decent covering of shining green moss and water weeds that wave in long fringes from his half-disguised limbs.

The third and fourth terraces begin to penetrate into the woods, and the shade of noble trees falls upon spaces of greensward beyond. Down the middle of the slight incline in the former of the two runs a waterway unique in its fashioning, a narrow channel hollowed out in stone, with the edges waving and curling into shell-like spirals, thus giving the water a thousand rippling, swirling motions in its downward course. Higher hedges close this in, leaving a broad graveled way on either side, and stone benches at intervals must invite to pleasant musings on hot summer afternoons, with half articulate murmurs of coolness as their accompaniment.

After this the woods stretch away and you follow delicious shady paths thinking of the happy chance that this bit of forest afforded in planning the domain. But if by accident you approach a lateral boundary you suddenly find yourself looking out over the open grassy country again and realize that the hand of man first planted what nature seems now to have taken so completely to herself. Once we came upon a little Madonna inserted in the hollow of a tree-trunk. A flower cup hung suspended before her and it was not empty; we could not help smiling at her fondly as we rested upon a seat opposite and gave way to the speculations she and many other things evoked. Perhaps we were tempted to some expression in the presence of the little figure.

Monte Cassino. The Court.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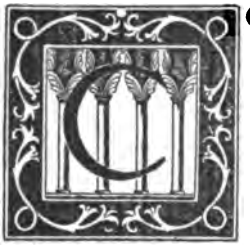
I am sure a votive offering of thanks would have been consistent with our mood, and as we returned to Viterbo in the face of a saffron sunset, we decided that the Madonna of the Ilex should in future be ours.

MONTE CASSINO AND RAVELLO.

"Beautiful valley! through whose verdant meads
Unheard the Garigliano glides along; —
The Liris, nurse of rushes and of reeds,
The river taciturn of classic song.

"The Land of Labor and the Land of Rest,
Where mediæval towns are white on all
The hillsides, and where every mountain's crest
Is an Etrurian or a Roman wall."

— LONGFELLOW. *Monte Cassino.*



COMPARATIVELY few people hurrying north from Naples turn aside before reaching Rome to visit the town of Cassino and the monastery that lies above it, and yet it is well worth a stay of a day or two, especially if one has the good fortune to happen upon a market-day, when the country people from all the valley of the Garigliano gather into the town and collect upon its wide market-place.

In Italy it is only necessary to arrive in a place which one has vaguely thought of as quite obscure to be at once convicted of disgraceful ignorance. Monte Cassino was to me hardly more than a geographical expression, and yet I find that its past resounds with great names and mighty deeds, and that its history combines

all the needful elements for the weaving of a thrilling historical romance. Saintly miracles, courts and kings, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and conflagrations, all have visited this sacred retreat, and it has survived them all. Popes and emperors have held court here, weighty theological questions have been settled, and the famous interview between Gregory XI and the great Frederick II took place on this spot.

It was already some hundreds of years old and the summer residence of many a wealthy Roman family, when Pliny wrote of its fine amphitheatre, built at the sole expense of a Roman lady, Ummidia Quadratilla, the roll of whose impressive name harmonizes with its still imposing ruins. Her wealth may be imagined, and it is said that her interest in the drama never flagged though she lived to an advanced age.

It was here also that, in a domain of such extent and splendor as to be called the Home of the Muses, Mark Antony carried on the shameless orgies which were the theme of Cicero's reproaches, so that it is easy to see that Casinum, as it was then called, may awaken august and classic memories. But the magnificence of Casinum and almost its existence were blotted out by the barbarians who ravaged Italy, and for nearly a hundred years the few inhabitants who survived must have lived ignored by the world outside. It is easy to imagine them as leading a life of poetical and pastoral simplicity such as one associates with the rites of a mythologic worship as practiced by an agricultural people, but no such innocent view was taken of their case by the pious church chronicler who discovered their deplorable condition.

"In spite of the fact that Saint Peter himself is said to have preached Christianity here," he remarks, "these unfortunate people are plunged in the profound darkness of ignorance and the unspeakable horror of idolatry!"

Deliverance, however, was near at hand, for the career of Saint Benedict had already begun. Born of noble parents, such was his piety that at the early age of fourteen, shocked by the corruption of Rome, he fled from the city with his nurse Cyrilla and for three years hid himself in a cave of the Sabine Mountains, where he was fed by a devoted hermit. The extraordinary sanctity of his life attracted a host of followers, and in the course of years Saint Benedict had founded twelve monasteries. Here he cultivated thorns of a peculiarly sharp and cruel variety, to be used in the mortification and laceration of the flesh, but Saint Francis of Assisi, upon visiting these monasteries some centuries later, converted them all into roses, which flourish in profusion to-day. At length the jealousy of certain priests of that country reached such a pitch that they laid plans to corrupt the monks of Saint Benedict and even to poison the Saint himself. Therefore, in order to be no longer a source of disturbance in the region, and in accordance with a divine message, Saint Benedict, with two of his most cherished disciples, departed and journeyed toward the south. Two angels led the way and three crows flew slowly behind, and Saint Damien assures us that for five hundred years the descendants of these crows dwelt at the monastery, where several tame ones are still kept in memory of the miracle.

When Saint Benedict reached Monte Cassino he discovered with grief the condition of affairs before referred to. In shady groves and graceful temples Venus, Apollo and Janus were worshiped with unquestioning faith. The summit of the mountain, a fine pyramidal mass which rises steeply from the plain, was crowned by a citadel built of those enormous cubic blocks of rock laid without cement which stir the wonder of the builders of to-day, and the remains of which may still be seen. In

the heart of this impregnable fortress rose their most sacred altar to the war-god, and upon this very spot Saint Benedict instantly determined to plant the cross. Accordingly, he preached to the people with such ardor that they hastened to renounce their idolatrous errors and with their own hands tore down the statue of Apollo. Having thus firmly established the religion of Catholicism, Saint Benedict set himself the task of framing a set of rules for conduct which if observed would lead his followers to a state of absolute perfection upon earth, and in this he succeeded so well that the fame of its results spread rapidly throughout Europe. After this he devoted the remainder of his life to presenting a shining example of all the virtues to his numerous disciples, and the miracles he wrought would if recounted fill volumes.

After the death of Saint Benedict the monastery was again and again almost destroyed. Pillaged and burned by the Lombards and later by the Saracens, and overthrown by earthquake, it nevertheless rose each time from its ruins, was patiently rebuilt by the remnant of its monks, and continued its life as before. Saint Benedict had embodied in his rules the order that his monks should occupy themselves with manual labor, music and study, a precept which contained the germ of their future pursuit of science and letters. The library of the monastery became famous, and after the invention of printing a press was kept busy in connection with it. Among its publications one may contemplate with awe the work of one of its humble but indefatigable brothers, a Hebrew and Chaldean lexicon, "with perpetual commentary," in ninety-nine volumes, upon which he spent thirty years of uninterrupted labor!

But to return to the evening of our arrival. The inn was less pretentious than its name, Hotel Villa Marco

Varrone indicating, of course, that it stood upon the site of the Home of the Muses. Fortunately the clean linen sheets which made the beds inviting helped one to overlook the fact that the sweeping of floors was superficial, and the dinner, served upon a very small table in the corner of a half-lighted drawing-room, was passable.

In the evening we explored the little town, which begins in the valley and climbs for a short distance up the sudden and steep incline of the mountain. Bits of old Roman pavement can still be traced in the streets, and the views gain in beauty with every step of ascent. The broad floor of the valley stretches away, watered by the pretty winding stream of the Garigliano, and surrounding it are mountains of fine and varied shapes. Some hundreds of feet above the village is a castle of commanding picturesqueness, and high above all sits the monastery upon the leveled top of its lofty cone. A perfectly-built road with stone parapet leads with many a curve and zigzag from the valley upward, and low trees and sparse grass cover the slopes. Part way up, the successive shrines of a calvary surprised us by their ruined condition, not the gradual decay of antiquity, but the result of disregard and wantonness, and gave us an uneasy feeling of inclination to remain in Cassino and see to it that they were restored to completeness and respect. Work upon the road was still going on, and the laborers, who bore heavy burdens of stone upon their heads, were girls and women.

The next morning we wakened early, but a continuous hum of voices was already rising from the street below, and on looking down a cheerful crowd could be seen chatting and exchanging salutations as they moved toward the open market-place. We exulted as we perceived that the women wore the bright skirts, laced bodices, and white head-dresses of their national costume,

set off with beads and ear-rings; but there was an added touch, quite local and altogether delightful. Upon their heads they carried open baskets containing the produce they had brought to dispose of, and these were covered with gayly striped homespun scarfs. As soon as breakfast was over we went out to enjoy the company and if possible to become possessed of scarfs. Addressing one of the women, we asked if she wished to sell her *coperta*. She drew back and abruptly refused, we thought with rather an offended air. However, we tried again, and the second woman was not unwilling to part with hers. An officious bystander stepped in to assist at the bargaining, and thereafter constituted himself master of ceremonies. We completed the purchase amid the waxing excitement of the community, bore off the first *coperta*, and prepared to secure a second. There was a great difference in them, the choice of coloring in some being pleasant and harmonious, while in others it was crude and tasteless. Offers came thick and fast; we were crowded and pressed upon; *coperte* were waved at us over the heads of the multitude; everybody vociferated and shouted at once, and all in sight ran to join the throng. The second *coperta* was had for a somewhat less price, and then a third and fourth became ours. We had paid eight and ten *lire*, which I suspect was considered to afford a desirable profit, but after all who could grudge such a sum to the patient women who had woven them?

It was difficult to convince them that we did not need the *coperte* of all Cassino, but at last a diversion was effected through the medium of our self-constituted impresario, and the assemblage was given to understand that one of the Signore wished to take a photograph. Our funds by this time having run low, I returned to the hotel, which was not far away, for *soldi* to pay the models, who meanwhile were to be posed in a favorable position.

On my return, in the course of a few minutes, there was no longer any hope of approaching the photographer, who was now surrounded by a solid wall of human beings. Through occasional apertures in the mass, as the people shifted and swayed in their efforts to get a better view, we caught glimpses of our aid beating back the crowd, while the artist with undaunted coolness posed and instructed her subjects. I know not how we should have extricated ourselves from the eager importunities of the populace but for the arrival of the carriage which was to take us up the mountain. We struggled into it and drove away, leaving behind us proffered *coperte* of every hue.

The monastery of Monte Cassino, which has been declared a "national monument," is at present conducted by about forty monks, who devote themselves to the education of some two hundred boys. These, when released from their studies, may be seen capering about its solemn courts and cloisters and tearing up and down the magnificent width of its stone stairways. Upon our arrival we received permission, on presentation of visiting-cards, to be shown the building and to have luncheon served to us, and after walking about for a while unguided we were conducted to a small room opening from one end of a long refectory, where a meal had been prepared for us. We were waited upon by a young brother in long black robes, rather shy but very gentle and polite, who seemed pleased to answer all our questions; and afterward we were put into the care of another, older and more experienced, and started upon a tour of sight-seeing.

There was so much to see that I believe had our zeal equaled that of our *cicerone*, we might have remained for days. He was a tall, spare monk of about sixty, and his fervid love and admiration for his monastery were so

Ravello. Pergola in the Deserted Garden.

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genuine and unaffected as to be truly touching. Every stone of it was dear to him, every relic precious, and it would indeed have been a perfunctory sight-seer who could have resisted warming to his enthusiasm. Our sympathy gladdened his heart and he grew more and more eloquent and expansive, while every sentence bristled with "Già!" and "Ecc!" as his long thin arms flung themselves abroad in waving our gaze to glories around and above us.

The riches that have been showered upon this foundation are almost incredible. The whole interior of the great church, for example, is incrusted to the ceiling with costly marbles, in panel and mosaic of every tint conceivable. Numbers of chapels are finished each in different color and design, a rare and beautiful green marble from Africa often appearing. There is also much lapis lazuli, and one altar is enriched with large amethysts. Gilding and fresco are lavished everywhere and the carving is elaborate and magnificent. And to think of all this on a lonely mountain-top, miles away from any city!

But this was but a small part of it; we walked through room after room, corridor after corridor. The library alone is almost endless and full of rare manuscripts and valuable old volumes, gifts from rich patrons. That it should have accumulated or retained such riches is wonderful, for no further back than the end of the last century the fiends of the French Revolution, after having stolen everything possible to carry away, ruined and destroyed what was left until they were sated, taking especial pains to tear into fragments and set on fire archives, precious manuscripts, and books.

From the library we were taken down, down, seemingly into the bowels of the mountain, to the portion covering the spot where Saint Benedict lived and worked. Here wonders recommenced. What would be the

amazement of that holy man, could he behold the transformation which has taken place there! Everywhere under foot, in pavements and broad stairways, we trod upon a polished stone, so beautiful with its perfect surface and warm creamy color that we were tempted to examine it especially. We were surprised to find that it was limestone, and fell to wondering how a substance so much richer in effect than white marble should not be oftener chosen in its place for similar purposes. The walls were covered with never-ending legend and story in modern fresco, and our guide lovingly expounded it all. Occasionally we came to a huge rugged segment of earlier building, containing a lancet window or a heavy arch. A battle-scarred portal had escaped destruction, and there it hung, a thousand years old, bound and clamped with iron, and armed with prodigious bolts, warlike and formidable still.

When all was done we had not seen half the extent of the building, indeed hardly two sides of the greater quadrangle. On taking leave there is no such thing as feeing or direct payment of any kind, but one may place an offering in the box at the door, and this, of course, one is glad to make ample enough to be a suitable return for such entertainment.

In the late afternoon we drove down the mountain again, lain in wait for at one or two favorable angles of the road by skirmishers with *coperte* for sale. A last determined effort was made at the station, where just before our departure two persons urged us to become purchasers of a *coperta* of especial value, according to their assurances. It being particularly new, raw and garish, by a natural course of logic they had reasoned that if an old and worn *coperta* were desirable how much more so must be a new and unused one of such dazzling colors. Their disappointment almost induced us to

encourage a low standard of taste in Cassino—almost, but not quite, and we departed leaving it behind.

RAVELLO.

"Where vines carve friezes 'neath the eaves,
And in dark firmaments of leaves
The orange lifts its golden moons."
— LOWELL. *An Invitation.*

Of all places in the region about Naples to dream happy days away in, Ravello most steals the heart. I know that no stage-setting can surpass in perfection Amalfi, no fairy-tale equal the old Capuchin monastery, with its proud position, its matchless *pergola*, and the charm of its interior. But if time at all presses, after a day and night it is better to mount the thousand feet remaining before you reach the heights of Ravello and there for a while fix your abode.

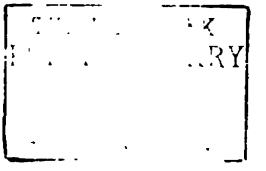
Those who drive up the steep mountain road in the heat of the day, swallow a hasty luncheon, take a preoccupied glance at the view, and a hurried survey of the mosaics in its cathedral, and then are off again, know not Ravello. What could they tell of evenings on the Bishop's Terrace, of rambles in the chestnut woods, of hours of revery in the gentle decay of deserted gardens, of climbs through remote hill villages when morning's energy makes activity easy, and sunsets from the Belvedere of Cembrone, with the most heavenly prospect in the world spread out at one's feet? No, Ravello is too rare and beautiful to be treated with the disrespect of a superficial glance.

Then, you can be so nobly lodged there. You may become a guest at the bishop's palace and enjoy the freedom of the charming old place without and within, where the dining-table is laid in what was once the private

chapel, and the sacred dove still hovers in the fresco of the ceiling. The red and white wines here offered are far-famed and delicious. From the dining-room you step out upon the stone-paved terrace, enclosed and protected on two sides by the building itself, like a roofless veranda, and opening to the garden on the third, while the fourth overhangs the azure gulf of Salerno far below, and the long perspective of mountainous coast sweeps away in blue and bluer lines toward the sunny plain of Pæstum. One cannot from here detect the remains of Greek beauty that spring from that sacred earth, but one is conscious they are there—those eternal temples, the perfection of whose soaring columns, golden and sun-warmed, rises ever against a crystalline sky from the deep green of banked acanthus and starry asphodel.

But here on the terrace it is restful and beautiful enough for the soul of any mortal, and so it is to pass beyond into the more retired little garden, so small in extent but with its space so used as to outvalue an enclosure many times its size. This knowledge of how to use a space, surely it requires as high a wisdom in gardening as in filling a canvas. This one rears a thick wall toward the side from which might come any invasion of its privacy, while a low solid parapet faces the view on the other. The alleys that traverse it are sunk some fifteen inches below the surface of the flower-beds, from which they are divided by broad substantial copings of stone, worn to pleasant irregularities. Upon these copings as a foundation rise in every direction heavy pillars which uphold a rough open lattice made of the slim trunks of saplings with the bark left upon them, and yielding support for gnarled and twisted grapevines that, meeting and crossing above, form a leafy roof over the whole garden. At the end of one vista the wall retreats to form a semicircular recess, and there between stone

Ravello. A By-way.



benches stands a little table where in a pleasant shade coffee may be enjoyed and books spread out. Against the mellow walls silhouettes of grape-leaves fall aslant, and gay blossoms look up everywhere toward the sunshine that sifts down through the rustic screen overhead.

Ravello is planted upon the summit of a spur of limestone rock, a sort of promontory with steeply descending sides, that juts from Monte Cerrito, pushes out toward the sea, and then suddenly terminates in the precipice of Cembrone.

Great was its history in those early centuries when it was harried by pirates and figured in legendary romance, when its nobles lent of their wealth to princes, founded colonies, and filled high positions in church and state. The remains of its many palaces, now sheltering the remnant of its once great population, show what it must have been; and all through the little town bits of carved marble, pillars, capitals, fragments of inscriptions, are built into the walls of dwellings already old yet young enough to have borrowed from an earlier age.

One splendidly constructed road approaches Ravello from the shore by many a turning and stops short before the cathedral. Beyond this point all exploration must be on foot. There are narrow stone-paved lanes, with flights of steps which mount to higher levels or drop to lower ones. A path, for example, will have a few rough stairs of irregular blocks of stone, then a few steps of slope more or less steep, then more stairs, and so on. And up and down these precipitous pitches run the barefooted women and children as easily and confidently as goats, the women often with huge burdens upon their heads. These I have seen of such weight and bulk that they could only be carried and balanced with the bearer in motion. For any pause on the way they must be shifted to the ground.

There is great beauty among these people, and many of the children especially are adorable little creatures, with big appealing eyes and charmingly moulded faces. But it is sad to see how prevalent goitre is among the older women and what a fearful size it reaches. One poor creature, not past middle age, sits and begs just without the episcopal palace. Goitre of a size beyond belief disfigures her, and she was born blind. She greets every passer-by with a monotonous whine, but this is merely professional. She is in reality a thrifty, able, and not uncheerful person. Blind as she is, she walks all over the village alone, she takes care of herself, attends to her own house, even to scrubbing the floors, and when not plying her occupation of begging talks pleasantly and sensibly about her life.

From a walk in the chestnut woods behind and above Ravello you descend at first upon the Piazza del Toro, balancing itself upon a saddle of the ridge and overhung upon one side by palaces that once belonged to the most ancient and august families of the region. Indeed the piazza was once the point of extremest aristocratic exclusiveness in all Ravello. Only the nobles might live here. Here they built their sumptuous abodes and with fortifying walls dominated the citizens and laid grievous taxes upon them. So steep are the approaches that one marvels how it was ever possible to transport thither the marble columns used in its lavish adornment.

There is nothing bellicose or imperious at present in the aspect of the piazza. What remains of its walls and palaces is free to a population which looks evenly democratic enough, and all is open to the sun and breeze. In the midst rises a fountain, one of the most delightfully quaint in all Italy, on whose broad rim stand a lion and a winged bull. As we stood enjoying the grotesque

proportions of the latter animal, with his surprising breadth of countenance and scantiness of ear and horn, an old peasant came to draw water and complete the picture, for he bore with him a copper water-jar in shape as beautiful as a Greek vase and in color such a rich combination of shaded reds and greens as made its polished surface resemble an agate.

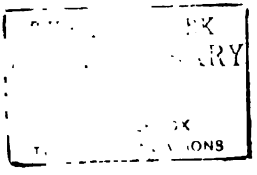
In this piazza we had a friendly chat with some daughters of the people who took a frank interest in the cut of our garments, but that part of the population with which we became most familiar was certain groups of naughty, pertinacious little girls who attach themselves to strollers in the base hope of gain and are not to be shaken off. In the beginning a lengthy appeal for alms assailed us from the rear, couched in tones of a woe so artificial that I presently turned and gazed at the little imposter with a frown of the same exaggerated quality, at which she instantly burst into a fit of irrepressible giggles.

We thought it best to have an explanation with her and her companions at the outset, and laid down our principles with great distinctness, throwing in some moral warning in regard to the degradation of beggary and closing with a clear statement of our preference for a walk unaccompanied. This was all received in high good humor, but not with any degree of seriousness, and the young ladies still continued to attach themselves to us, trotting behind or beside us and ever and anon from mere habit throwing in a perfunctory suggestion of *soldi*. They pattered after us up long ladders of staircased streets, leaned with us over stone walls, and volunteered information about the *bella vista* and the general affairs of Ravello with great sociability, and their sense of humor after a while quite reconciled us to their company.

In leaving the Piazza del Toro you may proceed through a crumbling arch, the very outline of which against the sky is a pure pleasure, and stop a moment, if you choose to call, at the portal of the great d'Afflitti family. It combines more varied architectural elements than were surely ever before called together in one portal, and as if to mock its own once haughty exclusiveness it now invites the entrance of an indiscriminate public, having fallen to the estate of an inn of but the second class. Passing it you thread your way between lofty walls whose huge stones form bosses and ledges where moss and grass like to cling. Then dipping toward the open piazza of the cathedral and again ascending a little through the roughly paved streets with their frequent turnings, ducking under low roofs and arches, you at last near the end of the ridge and ask entrance at the gate of the garden where the Belvedere of Cembrone waits to show you the boundaries of Ravello under the magic of the sunset.

Sometimes the entrance at this wicket is easy, and sometimes grudging, but in the latter case a prospect of *soldi* usually persuades, and you saunter down the central avenue between the spare fruit-trees and humble vegetable-beds that have succeeded to the splendors of the cardinal's pleasure-ground. At the end you pass under a pretty temple-like pavilion of stone and stand upon the noble escarpment crowned by the belvedere. The wide stone parapet upon the outer edge swells at intervals into pedestals which bear up a succession of marble busts. One wonders who they are, these ladies and gentlemen of a period not very remote, portrayed with an art so innocent of anatomy and proportion. But the eyes rest upon them but a moment. What are they, in the face of the glorified world unrolled below and beyond! A thousand feet down the blue waters dance and

Ravello. The Fountain in Piazza del Toro.



sparkle, and a white crest of foam outlines the rocky shore, where sometimes out of the very billows, sometimes from a position a little more elevated, those time-gnawed towers lift themselves that watched for the attacks of the corsairs.

On one side of the spur of Ravello the Dragone leaps and foams in its swift descent to the shore, and spanning bridges and picturesque stone mills mark stages of its progress. Upon the other a narrower but quite as turbulent and noisy stream flows down through the little town of Minori, whose white houses and pretty *marina* peep cheerfully from between the inclining hills. Beyond, toward the east, the jagged peaks of Monte Finestra are penciled against the sky, and on the northwest towers the triple mass of Monte St. Angelo. And then in a sort of magnificently ordered confusion, downplunging toward the sea in every variety of form, come beetling cliffs, sharp peaks, green hollows, dark red masses of rock, clinging vineyards, and ruins of tower or castle emerging from the soft enveloping green of chestnut woods. On all this imperishable loveliness falls the glorifying radiance of the sunset, and you stand silent before it, while if it dims the eye for a moment it paints itself in unfading colors upon the memory.

The cathedral of Ravello even in its present deflowered state still possesses, from the wreck of its prime, marbles and mosaics of such beauty as to divide one's emotions between gratitude for what survives and indignation at the wanton destruction that blighted it. Its foundation, dating from the eleventh or twelfth century, seems to have been due to the Rufolo family, then and thereafter one of the most powerful of Ravello, and as different members subsequently added to its adornment from time to time, their gifts were chronicled in long Latin inscriptions, some of which are now obliterated,

whose quaintness may be inferred from one which runs as follows:—

> "*This work Matthaeus Rufulus ordered to be made in honour of the Virgin and her Son, and for the adornment of his country. To him, the lord, whose wife is Anna, let these be grateful.*
>
> "*Laurentius, their first in order of birth, Bartholomæus is here to none second in probity, Simon, and younger than they Franciscus pure of crime. These are the sons of the first born, Nicoletta, Iohannes, Matthaeus, the boy Urso, whose bodies may'st Thou not damn. Here follows a third Matthaeus, Simon's son; may he his grandfather follow, blessed in fame and in life. All these do Thou, O highest God, with fatherly affection for many seasons save!*"

To enter the cathedral was once to pass under a porch supported upon stately columns of African marble, and adorned with lesser pillars and arches in richly colored stone, while two flights of white marble steps led to the piazza below. The interior glowed with fresco and shone with dazzling surfaces of mosaic. There were massive pillars of many-tinted marbles brought from distant countries, and much woodwork, carved in wondrous designs, and never, we are told, did holy walls arise to cover so fair a treasure of all goodly and beauteous things.

Upon all this magnificence, toned and mellowed by time and hallowed by long association, fell the baleful shadow of the eighteenth century, that fatal age which withered and disfigured so much that had endured and

ripened till that time. Then, alas! for the hapless cathedral of San Pantaleone, it fell under the authority of a certain unspeakable Bishop Tafuri, who in a fury of ignorant "restoration" wrecked this beautiful temple and left it as we see it to-day, shorn of its rich portico, its precious columns of verd-antique sold into foreign lands, its frescoes smothered with whitewash, its carved choir-stalls and superb baldachino carried away, its tombs desecrated, and its marbles and inscriptions scattered abroad or covered with plaster.

Inside the great bronze doors scarcely anything remains besides the bishop's throne excepting the ambo and the pulpit, but these are worth coming far to see. Such beauty of proportion, such a marvel of wrought marble and intricate mosaic, such ingenuity of device and beauty of execution make these fragments of a consummate whole celebrated throughout the world of art. Delightful marble lions hold up the twisted supporting columns of the ambo, whose capitals flower into lovely variety above and each panel of luminous mosaic shows a new scheme of color and tracery.

Upon the pulpit, simpler in form and less brilliant in tint, are represented the two most important episodes in the dramatic career of Jonah. On the one side the whale, terrible to behold, with dragon-like tail, wings and claws, rears his distended jaws aloft, between which a resigned pair of legs with the ankles held evenly together is disappearing. Upon the other, Jonah is emerging from the same jaws with dignified deliberation, his raised left hand calling the attention of the devout and his countenance expressing the last degree of saintly acquiescence.

In the bishop's palace our bedroom windows look directly over the edge of the steep descent to Minori, down upon whose roofs we could almost drop a stone.

On Thursday evenings a curious and touching custom is still kept up there, the celebration of the institution of the sacrament. This is done by placing a light in the window for a few minutes. We watched for it, and it was pretty to see the little tremulous sparks appearing one after another in the windows of the humble dwellings, resting there for a short time and then disappearing again.

In many ways little Minori had attracted us, and in the end we decided to go downstairs and pay it a visit. The abrupt descent is by means of many a staircase of flat stones reached by zigzagging between whiles in narrow rock-paved ways, sometimes bounded by walls and sometimes only by abundant wild shrubbery, but all is so enveloped in green that from below a path could hardly be traced. Meanwhile Minori smiles up at one in all the gayety of its many tints, for in southern Italy there is no cowardly avoidance of all but neutral tones. The dwellings are bright with pink, yellow, terra-cotta, or pale green, but there is nothing raw or discordant, only a fine riot of color in which earth, sky and water take part. Pots of flowers stand upon the window-sills, and if the street is cramped and stone-lined perhaps a vine is coaxed and pruned till a stout leafless rope of stem ascends to the roof, be it even a third story, there to blossom and expand till it covers a shady bower for summer.

Having reached the bottom, we suddenly emerged upon a level and stepped out upon the *marina* of Minori, one of the few narrow strips of flat beach that the rocky shore affords. Almost instantaneously we became objects of an uncontrolled curiosity. An incredibly numerous population seemed to spring from the earth about us, and in a few minutes we were surrounded by a crowd of something like two hundred. We were almost daunted; we asked ourselves for a moment whether we were not

out of place in that *galère*. We even thought of beating a retreat; but at this juncture a protecting angel appeared in the form of a pleasant-faced official in a plain blue uniform which indicated authority.

He made his way resolutely toward us, freely smacking the small boys who stood in the way and pushing the men and women about without ceremony. They appeared on their part to feel no resentment, and falling back at once kept a respectful distance while our protector explained to us that he had been sent to the relief of the ladies by his excellency the Syndic, who had given him orders to accompany and guard them on their *passeggiata*. To have become on the instant, as it were, the guests of the municipality inspired confidence, not to say vanity, and we proceeded on our way without any further annoyance. Indeed the attitude of the crowd had not been in the least menacing in the beginning, and we learned later, on talking with our guide, that the reason for the presence of so many idly curious men was the fact that the harvest was just over, so that for the moment they were out of employment.

The town, widening a bit at the opening of the ravine which its little stream has made, extends back between its walls and climbs somewhat on either hand. One could almost toss a pebble from one boundary to the other. The stream confined between stone parapets beautified by the action of time and water is the centre of everything and the prettiest and most individual feature of the little place. Our guide proved a pleasant, gentle companion, and finally did us the honor of taking us to visit his family.

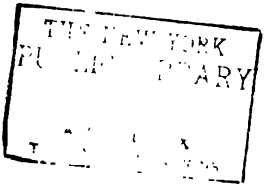
To see the interior of a little home in Minori was more than we had hoped for, and moreover this one was charmingly placed at just such an altitude as enabled its wee sunny terrace to overlook the rest of the village. It

commanded a prospect up and down the narrow valley and a glimpse of the towers of Ravello crowning the opposite height. Within, the wife and daughter were cordiality itself, smilingly showing us over their little establishment, the rooms of which were very small and sparely furnished, but orderly and neat. In one was a hand-loom, where they were weaving a blue and white cotton fabric not unlike Scotch gingham. In the few minutes we stayed they found time quickly and unobtrusively to prepare little gifts for us, and as we left handed to each of the three a large fair orange and a nosegay of roses and lemon verbena.

Our guard then offered to show us a new route by which to return to Ravello and respectfully requested that he might accompany us, urging that he should enjoy it, that it would be a pleasure, and we made no resistance. As before, each turn of the ascent was a point of vantage for a variation upon the beautiful view, and we were always under some graceful vine-trellis, or passing the open door of a little bird's-nest of a house attached to the side of the steep. Sometimes a family group would be sitting just outside in a *loggia*, and they always greeted the strangers cordially. Often the father would be holding in his arms a tiny baby rolled tightly in its swaddling-bands. It is one of the prettiest things to see the pride and pleasure these fathers take in their little children, carrying them about and seeming to enjoy them so much while they are still infants.

About half-way up a young priest overtook us, and we fell into conversation with him as we continued on the way together. It was the hour for evening service, and as we neared his little church he invited us in, and eagerly showed us its beauties, the images of the Madonna, the artless pictures, the view from the terrace. Presently he sent an old woman to gather lemons for us,

Ravello. The Church on the Cliff.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and as we waited the women and children began to gather toward the church porch where we stood. Bent old creatures and pretty, fresh little girls all approached him affectionately before going in, and stooped to kiss his hand. One young thing had brought him a bunch of red roses, which he accepted and then handed to us, and presently the old woman returned with a generous quantity of fine lemons. Upon this our priest produced one of the large and gaudy cotton handkerchiefs that are bordered with the coats of arms of the principal Italian cities, and tying the fruit securely into it, detailed a little boy to carry it for us.

We separated with much cordiality, and he stood looking after us for a few moments, framed in the shadowy doorway, before he turned to minister to the patient flock awaiting him within the church. Then we climbed the last windings to the Bishop's Terrace, and there took leave of our friendly guide, who soon disappeared into the twilight that was already settling over Minori, while the last rays of the sun still rested upon our heights.

THE HEART OF UMBRIA

"Dall' eccelse vette degli alberi l'usignuolo, alato
poeta della notte, piange e chiama la compagna lontana e sconosciuta."
BUTTI. *Incantesimo 69.*

IN a progress through Umbria few travelers tarry to visit the little town of Narni, peeping over the crags that rear themselves above the river Nar, which here has worn a narrow ravine for itself on its way to join the Tiber.

It was a gallant, quarrelsome little stronghold in its day, resenting and resisting the papal claim of supremacy at all times while it ardently engaged in feuds with its neighbors upon every occasion that offered, with that ever-present eagerness for battle, murder and sudden death characteristic of its age, and it was here that Gattamelata, that famous *condottiere* of the fifteenth century, was born. Its position could hardly be more commanding and its small inn, the Angelo, is fortunately suspended over the very edge of the cliffs, from which one's glance drops in a single leap to the river below and then climbs the opposite height, only enough less steep to give foothold to a thick growth of ilex trees and tangled shrubbery.

It was noon when we arrived, a warm haze hung upon the landscape and no sound came from the ilex woods; but we looked lovingly at them and thought of what would proceed from them a few hours later. A rosy, bright-eyed *cameriera* stood sociably beside us as we leaned from our window and chatted about the view with that easy but not disrespectful familiarity so common in her class. We made ourselves at home in the short space of time that it takes to bestow a light supply of luggage and descended to the dining-room, which also commanded the view, and at the same time, through an open doorway on the other side, a prospect if one pleased of such homely occupations as preparing vegetables for the next meal. We were the only guests and we ate with deliberation, feasting our eyes at the same time and remembering that as Narni had once suffered an almost annihilating visit from the Bourbons, coarse butchers of her art treasures as well as of her inhabitants, there was now little left that need crowd the conscience of a sight-seer and we could spend our day following the impulse of the moment. Then we wandered forth to zigzag through her narrow ascending streets, to pause before beautiful bits of stone-carving on her ancient walls, to dive into courts—little cul-de-sacs perhaps entered by a single, low, heavy-arched gateway—and to loiter before the interesting old vestibule of her thirteenth century cathedral.

There is nothing gloomy or forbidding about Narni; even its disrepair is cheerful, and perhaps most cheerful of all is its hoary castle, now converted to the uses of a prison. It stands somewhat removed from the village, commandingly placed above it all and so owning the widest possible outlook. We seated ourselves upon the edge of a steep grassy bank just below it to rest and watch the sunset, and were presently aware of the combined hum

of many voices pitched in a low key. We looked up and perceived the big arched windows of the principal floor of the castle crowded with manly figures who gazed forth enjoying the sunset, the beautiful view and the soft evening air and at the same time the amenities of light conversation.

Here then was a place where man, even under the displeasure of the law, was regarded as a being having social requirements. The chilling severity of solitary confinement was not allowed to damp the spirits of the erring inhabitants of Narni. There was the same amicable and animated buzzing that rises at an afternoon tea-party and there was something so cheerfully sociable about it — not a discordant note rising into prominence anywhere — that one could not but feel an indulgent friendliness toward whatsoever rascality sojourned within. Perhaps many of us have felt the kind of benevolent selfishness that is disturbed by the sight of discomfort among others, while we ourselves are in the enjoyment of circumstances especially agreeable; and so, at any rate, on this occasion the dispensers of justice in the town of Narni received the tribute of a grateful approval.

When the sunset of this long June day was over and we were established again at our quiet windows opposite the ilex woods, we sat silently for some time listening intently, then anxiously, and at last looking at one another with doubt waxing to certainty. Alas! there was no denying it, Narni was not going to yield what was expected of it, though we had pinned our faith to it, — a hope, a trust that had been so often disappointed and postponed, — yet surely we thought to be realized here. Had not Miss Symonds, in her delightful little book on Perugia, without which no one should travel through Umbria, promised that here dreams and longings should become realities? We began to feel

injured. Why then should we, humblest and most devoted of pilgrims, be singled out for misfortune? Why, hastening as it were with ardent desire to a banquet of the gods, must we alone sit down at bare tables? We were almost reduced to tears. For here, here in this spot, were our longing ears at last to be rewarded by the song of nightingales. Nor was it to be the slender voice of a single bird, but the affluence of numbers, a veritable chorus of delicious melody. The season, too, was the beginning of June, the very month for nightingales, and the place the heart of Italy.

Was it then a hopeless quest, this one that had now lasted almost two summers? All our lives we had looked forward to nightingales, beginning in the nursery where they abounded in our fairy tales, and on through the flowery paths of poetic romance where such lavish use of them was made as to mislead one into thinking that they sang all the year round utterly regardless of autumn gales or winter snows. One had but to land anywhere in Southern Europe to be greeted by a roundelay.

So even on the rock of Gibraltar we were prepared for initiation as we sat upon its seaward battlements and listened to exciting tales of smuggling, keeping at the same time an inner consciousness alert for the faintest opening twitter. But no, hardly here, said our faithful courier, reluctant to disappoint us in anything possible or impossible; the Alhambra, there now was the place. Ah! but for nightingales there must be old Moorish gardens; they went together. But when we reached the Alhambra it was still early spring; the elms were leafless. There was promise; the gardens already lay warm among green shrubbery, but the birds were silent. However, it was not to be regarded as non-fulfilment, Zino assured us; if they failed in the Alhambra they should not in Seville. In Seville they lifted their voices in one

grand concert, and Zino pointed upward, waving his hand from side to side and following the direction with his eyes, which expressed things unutterable. But at Seville, where was no lack of foliage, the nightingales were yet lacking, and we left Spanish shores still pursuing them.

After this did we not sit like Lazarus at the gate of the Queen's garden in Athens, when darkness had settled down, listening in vain for what other people declared they could hear there any night? And further, did we flag in our search as we advanced through Italy from Pæstum to Venice? But in Venice it was too late in the season; expectation must be put aside; we were intent upon other things.

One night we stepped into our gondola as usual and bade our gondolier take us wherever he chose. We floated for a while on the lagoons and then threading certain canals came on our return into the Trovaso, one of our best-loved ones. Its church has a wide *fondamenta* and there are tall trees beside it that make a pleasant flickering shade. Within in a retired little corner chapel there is, by the way, a delightful picture quite unique in its way—San Giovanni Grisogno mounted upon a white horse. The horse in beautiful trappings with the light catching the edges of his polished shoes supports the young saint armed cap-a-pie excepting as to the head where his blond curls have only the protection of a nimbus. His shield and heavy lance look warlike enough, but he wears an expression of gentle revery, which is perfectly reflected in the eyes of his steed. We liked to pay him visits when we passed in the daytime, and as we never met another votary there we came to feel a sort of proprietorship in our young saint.

As the oars slowed here, suddenly a long melodious whistle thrilled the night, followed by a shower of quicker

notes, so gay, so delicious, so unshadowed by care, that one's heart grew light in the mere hearing.

"It is a merle," said one whose authority we did not question. "But where can it be?"

Our eyes groped for it on either side of the scantily lighted canal and at last traced it to a window opposite us. The house, long and low for Venice, being but two stories in height, stood withdrawn the width of a narrow *fondamenta*, and in an upper window we could distinguish the dim outline of a cage, and presently a shadowy form within it, moving now and then from side to side, absorbed in the sounds it was pouring forth. From the room behind it a faint light filtered through, just sufficient to let us see so much.

Long we listened and enjoyed, and thereafter at some time in the evening we were apt to make the Trovaso a stopping-place, and our bird never failed us, he seemed untiring as he "piped and fluted to the night," and we could but wonder if he stopped only with the dawn. But on the third of these Arabian nights we carried a new companion in the gondola who, as the merle began his song at once exclaimed:

"Merle! Why, that is a nightingale!"

"A nightingale!" we gasped, gazing at one another with tumultuous feelings.

"A nightingale at last! Can it be possible?" These then were the strains so long waited for and yet at last unrecognized. And why did they fall upon unrealizing ears? Because, partly, it was such a song of pure gladness. Had not the nightingale been called plaintive, heart-moving, the interpreter of lovers and of the night? This little minstrel had known the joys but not the pangs of love; had heard what night says to the blissful but not to the tortured. Melancholy had never been an inmate of his soft breast. He had warbled but

to cloudless, star-sprinkled skies in pure ravishment at his own music, trilling to a world all brightness and felicity. I do not say that there are not nightingales and nightingales in the world. Who knows but their temperaments may be as diverse as our own; but this was our first and his character was rounded and complete; despondency had no part in it.

Yet here in Narni on this night he was still awaiting us in the unforeshadowed future. From behind that dark curtain of ilex leaves no sound came forth. Silence wrapped the moon-silvered heights and brooded over the inky depths of the ravine excepting for the murmurous voice of the Nar, prattling softly to itself as it made its way toward the Umbrian plain.

ASSISI.

"Douce mélancolie Ombrienne — "
— BOURGET. Impressions d'Italie.

The station for Assisi lies out in the valley, while the town itself clambers up the hills upon the southern side. The little omnibus that with rather inadequate horses labors across the plain and then winds back and forth, rising till it reaches the compact stony streets, set us down before the Hotel Subasio, unpretentious, but comfortable enough, and commanding a view that in itself might almost afford one a subsistence were the fare less substantial than it is.

We arrived late in the afternoon and the kindly landlord at once informed us that if we wished to step out upon the piazza close by we could see a religious ceremonial then in progress. We therefore took our way without delay in the direction in which the crowd was tending, and a few moments brought us out upon

the Piazza Saint Francis. The church of Saint Francis is one of the most curious and interesting in the world, being in reality three churches, one above another, partly built against, partly embedded in a stony steep. The lower one is cut out of the solid rock, the next rests upon it and is half supported by a projecting shelf. The third rises above all, to meet a broad sweep of grass which slopes gradually to meet its portal.

The middle church is the oldest and most beautiful and opens at the side upon a piazza partially colonnaded. It was here that the people were gathered, a moving crowd falling from group to group and passing in and out of the portal. The effect was that of a shifting kaleidoscope of beautiful colors in which a shade of mustard-yellow predominated, worn by the women in kerchiefs tied over their heads, but every variety of yellow was represented, as well as other brilliant hues, and there was a fondness for a pattern of gorgeous pink roses on a dark background. The gowns were almost as varied as the kerchiefs. Women of the upper class wore them of the ordinary cut, usually in light colors with a black lace veil over the head. One, a real beauty, stood near us for some moments. Her glossy hair and her red lips were typically Italian, but cheeks as rosy as hers are not so often seen here. She wore a rose-colored gown and her black Spanish lace veil was arranged with a deliberate grace. There had been a confirmation in the morning and the little girls were dressed in the crispest pink, yellow or white frocks, with white veils fastened over their curly heads with artificial flowers. They carried bells made of terra-cotta and decorated in red and white patterns, a custom for that festival.

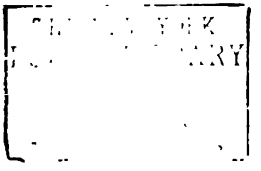
Presently we passed into the church, a solemn, dimly-lighted place, low, with heavy groining and short, ponderous pillars, somberly rich with its ancient frescoes

and sparely lighted by windows of beautiful old stained glass. Twilight pervades it even at noonday. At the end, which looked very far off, the organ was sounding and many lighted candles glimmered out of the obscurity. At the entrance where we stood daylight fell in and lighted up the ever-moving multitude, who pressed in, knelt before the different altars and then remained standing or passed out again. We waited, watched and were never tired. But at last all the moving crowd stood still, solemn chanting began and the procession, with swinging censers, advanced slowly down the church; priests in their richest vestments of white, gold and crimson, singers, acolytes, and at last, under a canopy, their precious relic, the veil of the Virgin. All the worshipers sank to their knees as it passed them. A great wave of feeling seemed to surge through their ranks; and it was irresistible, we knelt with the rest, and could not have done otherwise. Slowly out of the church it went, and then all the people rose and followed after.

It traversed the lower piazza, and mounting the street beyond till it was on a level with the upper church, turned and came back over the grassy expanse before the entrance. Here all the people stood still again, while the ecclesiastics went on into the church and after a little appeared again in an open *loggia* above, which was hung with costly tapestry. And here, when the relics came into view anew and were raised above the sill, the people all knelt again and the service proceeded. At certain points a low, deep murmur rose from the crowd: the responses. It was like the wind through tall trees, not a word audible—only a low-toned, mighty sound that thrilled through one, most impressive, most touching.

At last it was over and the concourse of people began to stream away, many of them having come from

Assisi. Dwellings.



a long distance. We leaned over the stone parapet of the upper piazza and were speculating upon the meaning of some things we had just seen when a pleasant voice behind us asked,

"Can I help you? I live in Assisi.'

We turned to see the attractive face of a girl of perhaps twenty-five, who smilingly offered to satisfy our curiosity with any explanations we desired. We at once fell into talk and she presently told us that she was English (which we had recognized) and that her husband was a native of Assisi, where she had lived since her marriage.

"It is a treat to me to be able to speak English again. I have hardly spoken it for two years," she added, as we walked away together. She constituted herself our guide and with her we strolled from place to place, visited the churches, lingered to enjoy the views from higher and higher points and finished the afternoon in her own little home, which she laughingly offered as a final interest for sight-seers.

Like all the *quartierini* of Assisi it was entered by a door opening directly upon the pavement, in the even frontage of gray stone buildings that marches up the hilly streets. A red-tiled staircase led up to the *primo piano*, where a little drawing-room, also with tiled floor, was made homelike by a piano, a glass cupboard of silver and some books and pictures. All the light came from one large window set high in the wall and reached by three steps which led up from the floor. A sunny dining-room opened beyond, yet the most interesting apartment was the kitchen, where the place of the prosaic cooking-stove was taken by an impressive altar, fit for sacrifice. A bonnet-like roof projected above, to lure the smoke of burnt offerings to the chimney, no doubt, and all about the walls hung copper utensils of such graceful shapes

that the thought of using them for merely culinary purposes presented itself as almost desecrating.

But best of all, and a flight above the rest, there was a refuge for warm evenings, an open *loggia* large enough to take tea in and at the same time look down upon Assisi, descending street below street toward the wide-spreading plain reaching away to more distant hills. Our hostess, whose kindly hospitality was not yet tired, walked back with us to our hotel. As we went she confessed that she found little companionship among the dwellers in Assisi.

"But," she added, "I have my baby now, so I need nothing more."

With her husband, her baby and her books she professed herself entirely contented, and her looks went far to prove the success of at least one international alliance.

On the way we met two sweet-looking elderly nuns, friends of our companion, and after a few moments of talk they in the most friendly way invited us to enter their convent which was close by, where in a little parlor to which we were shown they treated us to rosolio and strange little cakes, made in curiously elaborate form and strongly tinctured with anise. It appears that rosolio may be of different colors. Till this time we had seen it only pink as the pinkest roses and redolent of their fragrance, but this liqueur was as deep in color as a Jacqueminot and with a little spice added to its rosy flavor.

The next morning we again joined our friend, to explore Assisi and the suburbs beyond its walls. At one point we passed a public fountain where women were gathered to wash and stopped to watch them for a while. Animated was the chatter and loud the laughter proceeding therefrom, and our Signora remarked:

"This is the great gossiping centre of the town. All scandal begins here!"

Under a roof supported on pillars are two great stone tanks, one for washing and the other for rinsing. On the slanting stone rim of the tank they spread out the garments and soap them thoroughly; they next go through a process of pressing, squeezing and sometimes beating, but never rubbing. Then wet, full of soap and heavy as lead they are packed into a basket and carried home on the head, up many a precipitous incline and flight of steep stairs. Arrived at home the clothes are put into a great earthenware tub, but first carefully sorted and the garments of the women and children placed below with those of the men above, otherwise the owners would suffer terrible aches and pains. Over all a coarse cloth is laid and upon it a layer of wood ashes, then tepid water is poured on and next boiling water, after which all is covered over and left to stand all night. In the morning the heavy burden is again carried down to the rinsing basin and eventually the clothes are delivered rough dry. The final operations of starching and ironing are done at home and even women who are well-to-do learn to perform these for themselves.

The cheapness of living in Assisi is a marvel. On seven *lire* a day (a dollar and forty cents) a family of three may live like princes, so says our little friend, illustrating it in her own *ménage*. They keep, she tells us, a maid-servant, and a man comes in each day to do the rougher work. The wages of a man-servant is two dollars a month and that of a woman a dollar and forty cents. They have a horse and vehicle for driving about and the rent of their apartment is twenty-five dollars a year. Some idea of the cost of provisions may be gained when it is known that eggs are about six cents the dozen and green peas two cents the pound.

Meals are arranged as follows. Coffee is taken in bed at about seven in the morning. It may be interesting

to note here that in Assisi this beverage is looked upon as a panacea. If symptoms of illness appear there is no painful uncertainty as to the proper means to avail oneself of. Consign the patient to bed at once and administer cup after cup of strong coffee. This will in the end vanquish any disease.

At eight o'clock there is an informal meal called "the standing breakfast," when something substantial like eggs or ham is served, and at twelve comes *colazione*, the first important repast, of which the courses are apt to be soup, macaroni, and a dish of meat perhaps, of course accompanied by bread and wine. Instead of afternoon tea, at four o'clock a glass of wine is taken, and dinner comes at half past eight, when perhaps there may be roasted kid and salad as features of the repast, all of which goes to show that living cheaply in Assisi does not mean living poorly; and when it is added that we saw a pretty and well-fitting gown for the making of which the dressmaker's charge was eighty cents, little remains to be added!

And why could not a worse fate overtake one than to live long in gentle Assisi, to listen to the organ and ponder over the faded frescoes in its dim churches, to climb the mountains at its back and tarry at their hidden villages and monasteries, to sit at evening in the high arch of some ancient window and gaze out over the quiet beauty of this Umbrian landscape, where the loving spirit of Saint Francis seems to hover and his peace to have settled upon the veiled distances of the plain?

PERUGIA.

"Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris."

From Assisi to Perugia the drive is but two or three hours and in the late afternoon nothing can be sweeter

than to cross that part of the Umbrian plain which separates them and then take the long, gently winding climb that brings one up to the hilltops of Perugia; for the city clambers out upon various diverging ridges and dips down, filling the gaps between, all with a special individuality and character of its own, while once within its walls no one may resist its charm.

Few things are more futile than to draw comparisons,—indeed, there is a species of ingratitude in it,—yet one is almost tempted to say there is nothing more beautiful and satisfying than the outlooks from Perugia. Perfectly placed for the perspective of the Umbrian plain, through which the Tiber flows toward Rome, both valley and mounting heights are dotted with little towns, each one of which, besides its picturesqueness of situation and beauty of architecture, has its own history that would yield a succession of incidents beyond the invention of the imagination, while above and beyond all are the everlasting mountains, peaks only to name which is to stir the memory with poetry and romance.

As for the city itself, its exterior is a perfect and satisfying bit of antiquity preserved for us to the present day, and as for its soul, its past—what could it not confide to us if it chose to speak, to open its lips but once in answer to the questions one longs to besiege it with? Think of being able to look upon part of the massive wall built by the Etruscans,—those mysterious people who faded away before the power of the Romans,—and to follow the same walls as they were carried higher by the Romans themselves. Next came the Italians,—those giants of the Middle Ages,—who finished them and then fought and rioted within them and lived a life of magnificence and luxury and savagery at the same time.

Standing in the piazza, one of the finest in the

world, one notices bristling from the wall of the old municipal palace the spikes upon which were spitted the gory heads of traitors, or rather of the enemies of him who happened to be uppermost, and side by side with them the beautiful wrought-iron supports that held the rich draperies and embroideries that used to make the city glorious with color on festival occasions. Opposite, the cathedral looks down as gravely and immovably as though its floor and steps had not once poured with the blood of a murdered family, when thirty bodies of its members, splendid, stalwart youths, were borne forth and laid before it after one slaughter. The whole church had to be bathed in wine and reconsecrated before mass could again be said in it.

Those were great days, and this Baglioni family one of the most extraordinary in all history. Matarazzo, the dear old chronicler who lived among them and wrote of them, though horrified at their excesses, cannot withhold his admiration of them. They were as beautiful as angels of light, he says, so magnificent were they in form and feature, so noble in mien and strength. No one but the ancient Greeks could compare with them, and yet their hands were ever against one another — ever dyed in one another's blood. They made the annals of Perugia for a time, and turbulent annals they are, exciting to peruse, incredible to contemplate.

Walking in Perugia one is ever ascending or descending. Indeed, the pavement of some of the narrower streets is a series of shallow steps. In those somewhat wider one often meets a pair of sleek, white oxen taking up with their load nearly the width of the thoroughfare, and seeming to bring into the hoary city the breath of sweet pastoral fields, renewed with immortal freshness each June such as this. Then it is

ii. resting to dive under an archway and pitch down a steep *vicolo* to the lowest level of the city, gazing up at the beautiful old houses that crowd together and look over one another's shoulders above; or to clamber up a narrow way, turning now to the right, now to the left, to arrive at some point of vantage for a view, some building that holds a hidden treasure.

Passing down the principal street one steps into the Collegio del Cambio to sit for a while before Perugino's beautiful frescoes, to which one's attention is called by the following illuminating notice in a window near by, for the instruction of English-speaking travelers.

"Since the first January, 1899, every visitor of the halls of the noble Cambio shall purvey himself with a thicket. Thickets are to be bought from Professor Severini's apothecary's shops in Corso Vannucci, near the halls of Cambio."

A diverting collection might be made of these ingenuous advertisements, intended to be colloquial and attractive to strangers far from home. Such was a notice at the door of a restaurant the other day, "Hox Stail Soup." Who could mistake what savory fare was here indicated?

There was also another, interesting for its delicacy of suggestion,

"Messieurs les voyageurs se levant
tôt, sont priés de faire doucement."

Verily, how many times, in hotels of all nationalities, have I not longed that those who rose and departed early, slamming doors and shouting in the corridors, would but be willing to "faire doucement." And with the petition couched in such gentle and appealing phraseology, who would not be moved?

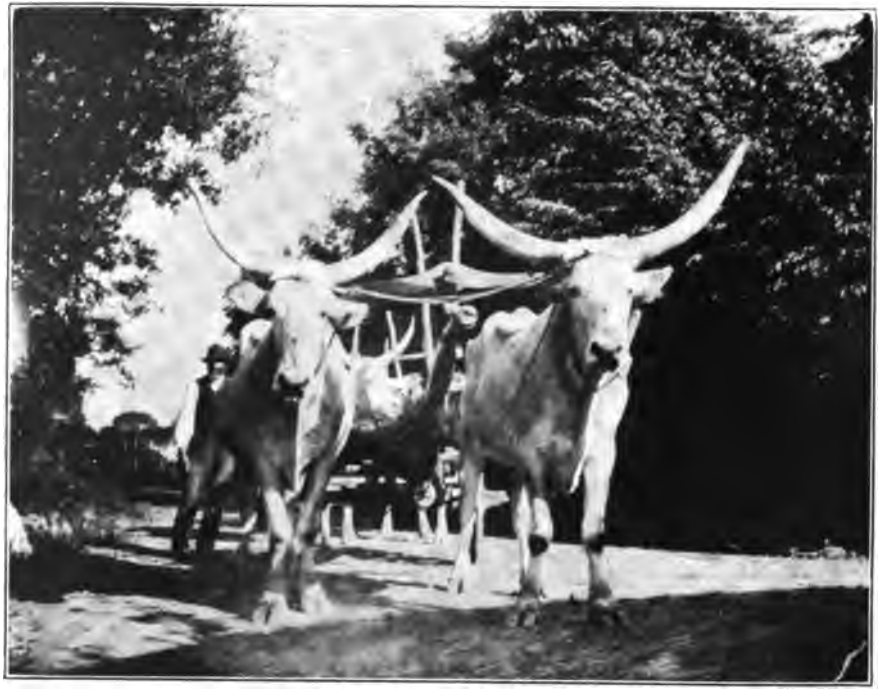
Or here is another in a hotel bedroom, which con-

veys information in such a casual manner as not to irritate the most sensitive:

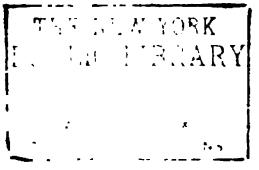
"We observe that when the stove is heated the price of a room is dayly and personally augmented by fifty *centesimi*."

In strolling one afternoon in the direction of the Oratorio of San Bernardino, whose charming pink and blue façade with its musical angels forms a delightful study, my two companions fell into the trap of a dealer in antiquities, whose personality alone was sufficient to excuse the defeat they later confessed to having suffered at his hands. He was tall, with beautiful dark eyes, a high pale brow, long slender hands, and an air of pensive seriousness, and wore a becoming tasseled cap of oriental colors. It was difficult to decide whether he was an impoverished descendant of one of the mediæval Perugian families, or (if one glanced at his profile) an Italian with an admixture of that blood so much older even than that of the Baglioni. His chambers, to which one ascended by a long flight of stairs, were stuffed with the wreckage of the aristocratic houses of the vicinity, according to his quietly convincing asseverations. His prices were high enough to befit treasures whose associations alone were almost priceless, and I soon strayed away and waited below in the quietude of a little piazza bracketed above the next range of closely-packed houses.

Sitting upon the parapet here one may enjoy one of the many beautiful views that Perugia affords, for the advantages of its position make it full of surprises and of unexpected outlooks. After gazing long into the distance my eye came back to rest upon nearer objects, and I found myself in close proximity to an open window upon the upper floor of a house whose foundation was far below me, in the abrupt descent of the ground at this point. The little room which it showed was empty and



Perugia. Perugian Oxen.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I dared to make myself at home in it for a moment, it was so inviting and spoke so plainly the character of its occupant. A white curtain waved to and fro at the casement, within was a narrow iron bedstead, also covered with pure white, and there was little other furniture excepting a dressing-case, stern in its simplicity, and a round-topped table drawn up beside the window.

Here, however, the spirit of the place centred. There were many books upon it, heaped up as though they had lately been consulted, some old and vellum-bound, others newer; and certain of them had been piled together to form a support for one volume standing open against them at a convenient slant. In front, spread out flat upon the table, lay a manuscript, the pen dropped beside it. A chair pushed a little back looked as though that moment quitted. It was the room of a student, and though he did not return while I trespassed upon his solitude I felt his presence there. I could see him bend over his paper for a while, writing rapidly, then pull a volume toward him and search for a passage that he needed, and then perhaps lean back in his chair with a sigh and let his eyes stray out of the window and rest upon the beauty that was his own possession as truly as the ascetic emptiness of his quiet room. The swaying top of a tree reached up out of a cleft between two near buildings, and beyond were the sun-warmed corrugations of the brown ranks of houses mounting upward or falling away below on either hand, with all their charming irregularity and antiquity, while further still was the perspective of open country and cloud-flecked sky: a glimpse of Tuscany, loveliest of Italian provinces.

I knew not whether he was young and ardent, with dreams of some time grasping fame and compelling the world with the children of his brain, or old and placid, carrying out some train of research, slowly, painstak-

ingly, for the pure love of it. But I wished him well, there was sympathy in my heart for him, and I was conscious of a feeling of reluctance in turning away.

On the way home it appeared to harmonize with the slightly subdued air of my two companions that we should devote ourselves to a search for the doors of death, those curious adjuncts to the entrance of a Perugian *palazzo*. Beside the broad opening of the main portal was a tall, narrow arch, a doorway for the dead alone; the living never passed it. From it the coffin was borne forth when a member of the family died, and in the next moment the door was securely barred, lest the angel of death who waited to enter where he had once come out should repass the threshold and claim another victim. These doors are now walled up, but a careful scrutiny shows the outline of them still, the heavy stones of the arch at the top being most easily discerned.

For whatever reason, the thoughts of the Perugians seem to have been much occupied with the contemplation of mortality—"Pulvis et umbra sumus," they must have kept in mind even when concerned with objects of as light a character as sweetmeats; for about Christmas time they compound a kind of *dolce* which goes by the gruesome name of dead men's bones, and there is also a small biscuit made of bean flour and called the cake of the dead. The latter has a special significance, for it is supposed to be connected with the funeral rites of the Etruscans, and many usages of Perugia with regard to the dead are strange and interesting. A corpse must still be buried at night, according to the mediæval custom, and the graves of the dead are illuminated once a year, when a requiem mass is sung for the souls of those who have passed away. But the Perugians sometimes have other than lugubrious associations with the transit from this life to the next, for once a year there is

a *festa*, including a cattle fair, called the Feast of the Dead, which is said to be a time of great rejoicing.

One could talk endlessly about Perugia, its delights are so many and so various. Its walks and its views never tire, there is some discovery to be made each day, a beautiful building overlooked before, a new route leading to an unfamiliar vista, an exquisite detail of architecture,—all so persuasive, so attaching, that one's heart fails at the thought of ever turning one's back upon it all.

Then there is the picture gallery, unique in its possibilities for studying certain masters. Where else can one so revel in Fiorenzo di Lorenzo's enchanting little figures, his decorous old saints, his nobles in fur and embroidery, his exquisite dainty youths, like slim, beautiful girls masquerading? Or Bonfigli's delicious singing angels, more elaborately dressed and more carefully curled than ever were angels before, with their halos adjusted so becomingly over their double wreaths of roses, yet with faces the most innocent and artless in the world, their whole being intent upon the instruments they play, and the song they are pouring forth.

Beyond the city walls we may drop any day to the plain below and find each time some fresh and entertaining excursion. We may encounter the icy chill of the Etruscan tombs if we will, and contemplate those calm, unperturbed beings as they recline upon their sarcophagus lids, with the same fixed but unseeing gaze that they have worn for thousands of years. Or we may follow Childe Harold to the beautiful little Roman Temple of Clitumnus, and rest beside the gentle river that flows below it. Or there are cities of the plain, like Foligno, and old monasteries hidden among the mountains where if you would carry pleasure with you it is well to take an offering of coffee to the monks, keenly relished by them but rarely enjoyed.

And so one might prolong the catalogue indefinitely. In fact, a whole book could be written and called The Pleasures of Perugia; nor can one say that such a book does not really exist in Miss Symonds' charming little volume, where she dwells so fondly and with such knowledge on the attractions of Augusta Perusia.

LAKE TRASIMENO.

While at Perugia one may give a day to Lake Trasimeno and by starting early have some hours there. The broken and undulating country between is sweet in spring with hay and wild flowers, and to the banks beside the road cling masses of pink and white cistus and wafts of fragrance float toward one that entice the wayfarer to desert the carriage, and leaving it to creep behind or wait at some point in advance, make excursions into fields carpeted with color.

Then it is hard to pass the rambling stone farmhouses with irregular tiled roofs and pictorial windows looking out over their nestling circular hay-stacks, their blossoming fruit-trees and their patches of garden vegetables; and if in response to appreciative glances any hospitable invitation comes from behind a dividing hedge there is the temptation to waste time within admiring and chatting. Such easy intercourse is much taken for granted here and the simple good breeding of the peasantry frees it from all embarrassment.

When at last Lake Trasimeno comes in sight it lies far below the carriage road, its still surface spreading away for miles between the grassy or olive-clad shores that softly recede and then rise into gentle rolling hills. Quietness broods over it; still contemplation has marked it for her own. A lonely fishing-boat or two rest indolently upon its glassy pale-blue floor, and to break in

upon its listless abstraction seems vulgarly importunate. It has forgotten its past. It remembers not that here Hannibal's great victory shook the Roman power in Italy; that in the hours of slaughter that accompanied it the vibrating air was torn by shrieks and groans; that the innocent little brook, which is still called Sanguinetto, poured a stream of gore into its clear depths. All these things are unreal and unheeded. Trasimeno lies idly dreaming.

But one descends and approaches by gradual stages, and familiarity yields the courage to break in upon its reserve. Following the shore for a while one comes at length to the village of Passignano, with a handful of houses and an inn that stands but a stone's throw from the water. We had not been sure that anything substantial in the way of luncheon could be found here, and so had provided ourselves with something, but the little hostelry invited us to remember that on the banks of Trasimeno, if ever, it was appropriate to partake of *lasche*, that fish which so often appears in the writings of the old Umbrian chroniclers. The Perugians, it seems, were inordinately fond of it, and, indeed, laid so much stress upon it as to awaken the suspicion that they were a somewhat greedy folk. The landlady declared herself equal to providing them in a very brief space of time, together with the wine of the countryside, which she recommended. So we mounted a short flight of stairs and found a small dining-room with low, broad windows commanding the lake, pleasant to rest and lounge in.

Presently we became interested in the preparations for our meal, and observed with some surprise that the napkins were handsomely embroidered. When the *lasche* made their appearance they proved to be unexpectedly minute, the dish containing a heap of scores of the slim, crisp morsels, hardly two inches in length. Our

own supplies were added, the wine was brought forth, and we sat down to the table drawn near the open windows. Opposite the windows and between us and the lake ran a stone wall, and upon the top of this in an irregular row sat a number of interested little boys, as at a theatrical representation. They were all alive as to what was going on in the dining-room, but I much fear that even spectacularly this Barmecide feast was a failure, as, when the banquet was fairly in progress, not much more than the tops of the strangers' heads could have been visible. The wine was pronounced good; the *lasche* met with a less ready acceptance. They are probably more or less of an acquired taste; at any rate, they have an odd trace of bitter in their otherwise savory flavor.

When *colazione* was quite over it was made known that the Signore desired to go out upon the lake, and in a few moments two boatmen stood below the window with the assurance that they were at our service. Had they a good boat? Assuredly they had, of the most superior. What would be the price per hour? Three *lire*, no less. Three *lire* was quite too much, the ladies would pay but two.

"Very well, then, Signore," with cheerful promptness, "certainly, two *lire* shall be the price."

We proceeded with more or less of an attendant following to the embarking place, a convenient group of low rocks, but the boat at first gave us pause. It was a rough fishing-craft, not over clean and with more or less water in the bottom. It looked as though it might easily let in more when too far from land. We hesitated, but the reassurances of our men were vociferous. It was the only boat to be had and its qualities were all that could be required. As for safety, oh, of the most absolute, and for cleanliness, why a few boards in the bottom would make all perfect! We were persuaded, and after the

preparations were completed stepped in a little gingerly. Once seated, however, the boat pushed off easily, we found ourselves unexpectedly comfortable and forgot all but the beauty of the day and place, the balmy air, the pleasant dip of the oars, the wooded nests of islands in the distance that were our goal.

For a few minutes our rowers propelled their craft silently, standing one at the prow and one at the stern. They were barefooted, weatherbeaten old fellows, and at a guess wore no more than two garments apiece, not including their battered hats. They showed no promise of a soul above the *lire* they were gaining, no thought beyond the satisfaction of food and slumber. We were yet to know them. At last one of them ventured a question as to the nationality of their passengers; the ladies, no doubt, were English. We explained that the ladies were from America. America! they had heard often of America. Many Italians went there. It was a land very far away. They would like to know how it was governed; had we a king like theirs? We began to elucidate, they followed with eager attention. They nodded at one another, they muttered exclamations, they plied us with intelligent queries, and their interest waxed from moment to moment. They rebuked one another if either disapproved of the other's form of inquiry.

"*Dio mio!* why do you ask the Signorina such a fool question? How do you expect her to understand?"

They put us through a category of demands in regard to daily life in our country, rents, occupations, prices of food, etc., and listened with profound attention to the replies given them.

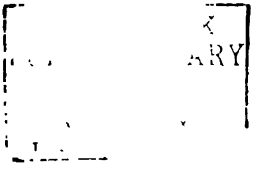
We were in the full tide of conversation when we reached the largest of the islands we wished to land upon, and our dear old men were somewhat disappointed that

we were not anxious to visit the important end, where there was a monastery, besides the villa of a gracious countess whom they praised unstintedly. She was good, she was liberality itself. Why, figure to yourself! she never gave less than a *lira* for *buonamano* when they rowed her across the lake! But we explained that we wished to disembark where the fisher folk lived; so skirting the shore to the opposite extremity we stepped off upon a shelf of rock and giving our boatmen something for wine, which they could occupy themselves in consuming while we strolled about, we walked down between the two straggling rows of houses occupied by the dwellers on Isola Maggiore.

To call them straggling, however, is only to intimate that they were not built in solid ranks but more or less irregularly and with spaces between, for they were as substantial and immovable in appearance as any on the mainland and of such a staid and sombre gray as to look doubly dignified. A sort of Sunday quiet seemed to brood upon the place. The women sat beside their open doors watching the play of the children. A handful of men were grouped where our boatmen went for their wine, but there was no appearance of a shop of any sort, no evidence of labor. The fishermen's hour of activity upon land had not arrived.

We had soon passed beyond them and came out again upon the lonely strand, where little reefs of rock projected from the green grass into the water and a warm stillness reigned. Hardly a sound reached us from the village, everything lay torpid in the balmy sunshine and the gentle lapping of the water against the shore was a subdued caress. The spirit of the hour and place enveloped us and we sat gazing out upon the water which stretched away and melted into hazy indefiniteness in the distance. It was peaceful, it was lulling, and we unwill-

Umbria. A Wayside Shrine.



ingly turned from it when the realization of time with its urgings and limitations warned us to be gone.

Our old men were ready to take us on to the Isola Minore, a little green wooded mound, whose solitude is invaded by but one small dwelling, that of the custodian, though what he is guardian of is not easy to see. He allowed us to roam over his island and to rest in the shade of his largest tree, which he assured us was unique, the single example of its kind, the wonder of every visitor who had any arboreal knowledge. It was certainly a majestic and beautiful tree and if later we thought we saw others resembling it, though of lesser size, on the mainland, we should be the last to desire to unsettle his confidence in its exceptional character.

When our explorations were over and we were again seated in our boat for the homeward row, it soon appeared that the thirst of our old servitors for knowledge and discussion was by no means slaked. The interval had but added to their craving. Having begun with the minutiæ of every-day existence they advanced to larger and more general topics, and instinctively addressing themselves to the member of our trio best able to respond to their demands, they launched into such an investigation of national questions of finance as astonished us beyond measure. They marveled at the freedom of the people in our country. They discussed the lighter taxes levied, they drew comparisons with the state of things in Italy, and at length they reverted to their own lives. They told us that they had not always been confined in Passignano; they had been soldiers with Garibaldi, they had known the tedious march, the blood of battle even; but, more than all, they had looked upon the Eternal City.

"O Signore! we have seen Rome! We with our own eyes have beheld that marvelous city. What beauty! what a wonder!"

We warmly agreed, we encouraged their ardor, we loved them for their simplicity, their fervor, their impassioned feeling. Last of all, having ranged over the field of material things, for it seemed as though they had left no department of human economics untouched, they came to the moral and spiritual. Did the Americans believe in God, the same God that they worshiped and the blessed Virgin? The signorina explained that they assuredly believed in the same God, though not all of them sought the intercession of the blessed Virgin.

"Signorina," pursued one of them, "you are wise, you have been educated and are learned. We cannot even read; we are poor and ignorant. Tell us, you who can understand these things, why is it that there is this great difference in the lot of us human creatures? They tell us God is good, then why are you rich and at ease while we live the life of a dog—'*una vita di cane*'?"

Alas! and alas! the question of all questions, the crowning perplexity of this unfathomable world was tormenting these simple humble souls just as it has and ever will the wisest of us. Who can answer it?

ACROSS THE APENNINES

"Di là dell'Appennino è il bel paese,
Di là dell'Appennino è il tempo bello.
Il tempo bello ch'ebbe tutta in fiore
La balda giovinezza del mio core;"
Panzacchi. *Corde manet.*

LEAVING Borgo San Sepolcro soon after noon, we were three hours jogging along in the droll little open omnibus train toward Gubbio, and for the first two followed the windings of the Tiber quite closely, crossing and recrossing it, till at Umbertide we left it to follow its course toward the south while we branched off to the east. Umbertide so coaxed us to remain that we very nearly dropped incontinently from the train without a reassurance as to the possibility of spending the night there. The solid, upreared wall of its ancient houses descends upon one side into the washing current of the Tiber, here grown to a wide stream, and upon the shoals and pebble beaches of the other, curly-headed, laughing girls splash and beat the clothes they are washing.

Crossing the massive old bridge one gets the whole beautiful picture, and a little further on its ancient castle reveals its most picturesque bulk, while little streets show

glimpses of dwellings, square and uncompromising as to the lower stories, but here and there terminating at the top in a pillared balcony overflowing with riotous vines and gaily flaunting blossoms. But a few moments swept us out of and beyond all this temptation and we left the Tiber behind us, and following up the narrow valley of the Assino, after a while emerged upon a fertile table-land.

We gradually came closer under the wall of the mountains, till when we reached Gubbio we found it beginning at the foot of the steep slopes of Monte Calvo and abruptly mounting with it. At the primitive little station beyond the edge of the town no carriages were in waiting, but a stout *facchino* shouldered our bags and walked before us toward the piazza. Changes seem to have come upon Gubbio, for when we had passed the first inn, meaning to examine the two others mentioned as being on the piazza and make a deliberate choice, we found no trace of them and returned meekly to the San Marco, whose proprietor had made little effort to secure us as we passed, being so sure of our return. A garrulous old woman-servant showed us to a corner room upon the third floor, where the *facchino* bestowed our belongings and respectfully requested that he might be again engaged to take them to the station at our departure. We seemed to be the only guests, so after ordering our dinner to be ready at seven we started for a walk.

There is a wonderful individuality in the different Italian towns. Certain choices of situation and habits of building being much alike, one might look for a kind of monotony running, for example, through the places in one province; but it is not so, and we thought as we pursued our way through its streets that surely Gubbio in particular resembled no other. As you face it from the level ground of its beginning, it rises before you flanked upon

the right by the city wall mounting straight up the stony brown steep, and on the left by a gorge walled by perpendicular cliffs. Almost in the centre of the city upon its high rock-vaulted terrace towers the huge pinnacled Gothic Palace of the Consoli, empty though not gone to decay. It looks as though the cliffs that rise up behind it would sooner disintegrate than it. Above that is the heavy bulk of the cathedral, so built that its back is embedded in the ground, and next it the old Ducal Palace, so ruinous that it can hardly be entered.

Whether Gubbio would ever present a cheerful aspect I do not know, but in the gathering evening it seemed a mournful spot to us. It has a look of neglect in its old age, for it is of monumental antiquity and we are seriously informed that it was one of the first five cities erected after the flood. At any rate, it was important enough to be commented upon by Cæsar and Cicero, and was magnificent in the great days of Rome, as the Roman ruins on the plain still testify and the small remains of the Temple of Apennine Jove on the neighboring heights.

There are even remnants of a still obscurer antiquity in the famous tablets of bronze in the Museum — the Eugubine Tables, as they are called — long a puzzle to antiquarians, but now discovered to contain the liturgical regulations of an ancient religion. However, it must be confessed that I feel no intimate affinity with even the ancient Romans, my affectionate interest being centred, so to speak, upon the Middle Ages and the time immediately succeeding; so that when in Gubbio I prefer to dream of Oderisio, the famous miniature painter whom Dante praises, or Master Giorgio, the majolica designer who perfected the ruby-colored glaze so loved by collectors; but most of all of that fascinatingly beautiful and wicked heroine, Vittoria Accoramboni, the

history of whose career is one of the most exciting romances of her time.

Neither must I forget the warlike old Bishop Ubaldo, patron saint of the town, who is venerated next to the Deity and with a more ardent enthusiasm. On the fifteenth of May they celebrate a strange festival in his honor that appears to combine old heathen with modern Christian ceremonies, as it is described. Great are the preparations beforehand, and upon the day there are banquetings and wine flows freely. A curious procession, unique in its features, parades the city for hours, and finally the sacred figure of Saint Ubaldo is borne at a turbulent run through the streets and up the steep hill above the town to the monastery named for him, where the closing rites take place; after which the poor saint, sometimes sadly battered through unintentional indignities, is allowed to rest for another twelve-month.

This night, however, an air of melancholy as well as disrepair seemed to hang over everything, and the dark color of the stone used in building adds to the gloom. Certain buildings suggest the opulent past, their size and solid construction having preserved them to this day when their graceful arched windows are mostly filled in, leaving modern rectangular openings gaping and black, and their grimy doorways give entrance to the poor population who now nest in them. Bleak and forbidding they looked as we trod the echoing flagged streets, and it provoked a half smile to see the names upon certain corners — the Street of Joy, the Street of the Sun — are now the abodes of dingy and shadowed obscurity.

The next morning a sound of infant lamentation seemed to rise from all Gubbio. We were more or less conscious of it as we partook of early breakfast in our elevated chamber — a breakfast I am bound to say of

the least appetizing — coffee that resembled licorice water and stale, unsalted bread without butter. On these occasions it is well to order an egg, if eggs are procurable, and at any rate to fix the mind intently upon the coming pleasures of the morning's sight-seeing.

We went first to the outer boundary of Gubbio, where, in the little church of Santa Maria Nuova, we looked for a certain Madonna by Ottaviano Nelli. We found it, admirably preserved, as our Baedeker remarked, the colors brilliant, the gold background luminous, but a more guileless company of pretty, simpering paper dolls surely never gathered about a languishing Madonna. We smiled at it, but it did not detain us long.

When we had left the little sanctuary we wandered toward the centre of the town, and as we advanced the cries that had assailed our ears earlier in the day grew louder and more frequent. Presently we saw that they proceeded from various tiny kids. From every side street would appear a man carrying one of these helpless orphans upon his arm, till at last we could bear it no longer, but inquired of one of the inhabitants the meaning of this chorus of woe. It then transpired that it was market day; that this was the season for *capretto arrosto* (roasted kid), a great delicacy, and so from all the outskirts they were being conveyed to the market-place.

Just then a more humane *contadino* appeared. He walked beside a white donkey, a beast with well filled-out ribs and a fine shaggy coat, across whose back was suspended a pair of large clean canvas pockets. Out of the openings at the top appeared the innocent white heads of two contented little kids, their long ears flapping to the jog of the donkey, and their appealing little noses pointed forward in interested observation of this, their first journey in the world. They uttered no com-

plaint, and if they were on their way to the sacrifice they were happily ignorant of it. This was really too much for our equanimity, and the plaints of baby kids too closely resembling those of human babies to listen to unmoved, we hurried away, glad that the day was to be spent in an excursion beyond the borders of Gubbio.

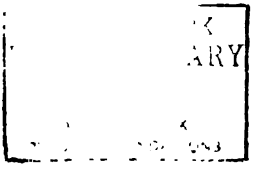
Shall I confess that, hardened by hours of forgetfulness and absence, we dined that night upon *capretto arrosto* and found it delicious! It is more tender than chicken, rich and succulent to a degree and savory with a stuffing of herbs in which rosemary predominates.

"So good," the *padrona* explained afterwards, "because they have never taken anything but milk. They are only fifteen days old."

We glanced guiltily at each other and felt a little like cannibals.

The evening of this day was marked by an interesting discovery. I bethought me to inquire of our *padrone* whether any trace of the ancestral house of the Accoramboni still existed in Gubbio. It was mentioned in no guide-book, so that there was not a clue to follow. He looked doubtful and appealed to the *padrona*. She knew nothing of any such family, and small wonder, as they departed from Gubbio some three centuries ago. Still they called to mind that an old citizen, wise in the lore of the place, was close by, and sent to see if he could give help. In a few minutes he came, a heavy, dark-visaged man, who could show the Signore to the place. Certainly, he knew that *palazzo*, and as we walked toward it he volunteered information of various kinds concerning Gubbio. He suggested purchasing possibilities, dropped dark hints about old lace and drew from his pocket a fragment of majolica that might have been Master Giorgio's, lustrous with a peculiar deep red glaze. He told us that the present occupants of the Palazzo

Gubbio. The Town Walls.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Accoramboni were well enough off; that they had quite rebuilt all the upper stories of the building, but that the lower court was unchanged; and when we reached it, an inconspicuous mass in the unbroken line of the street, he made the portal resound with loud knockings.

After a while the head of a maid-servant was thrust from an upper window, and at the risk of his equilibrium, with head thrown well back, he entered into an explanation of the eccentricity of the Signore, who would be under such obligations if they might regard the *cortile*. After as much time as might have sufficed to obtain permission and descend with the key, we were let in, and there in a stone-lined apartment stood a beautiful old well-curb of mellow carved marble, bearing the family arms upon one side. We felt like discoverers. It was evidently in an unvalued and disused place, a sort of lumber-room. May no vandal of a rich tourist ever discover it and bribe the unappreciative owner into permitting its removal!

Of course, Vittoria Accoramboni, in the radiance of that youth and charm that the old writers dwell on, had often leaned her warm breast against this very marble in those early days before an unscrupulous, ambitious mother had carried her to Rome, there to compel all hearts by the irresistible spell of her wondrous blond beauty. There she was later to become wife to the nephew of one of the greatest popes, to acquiesce afterward in his murder that she might become a duchess, and in turn, after a career with which all Italy rang, to be stabbed to death with aggravated cruelty and insult, but to be so avenged that for her life forty men suffered death in various fearful forms.

Such was Renaissance Italy, and here in this neglected lumber-room stood the impassive marble that had witnessed the beginnings of that extraordinary drama.

It seemed somehow to keep a nearer and more intimate connection with its past than any public, continually visited shrine, and almost to offer a half confidence to one who should venture to draw near it in a not discordant spirit.

We left it unwillingly and made our way back to the *albergo*, walking slowly beside our swarthy guide, but the deepening twilight only served to renew the impression that the silence and decay of Gubbio had made on us in the beginning.

URBINO.

"Perchè il Sanzio più tosto al cielo amico
Giunger potesse a volo,
Da natura gli fu posta la cuna
Bella sovra le nubi."

Earnest were the consultations that preceded the progress to Urbino. Much was expected of it. It had been so long anticipated. It was to be the crowning adventure in the succession of carriage journeys. Although we started out with commonplace horses, white oxen were to help us up the steeper inclines, and if ever the powers of the air were invoked to grant a favoring day, it was fervently done on this occasion.

Perhaps it is only in Italy that anticipations are more than realized. At all events when we fared forth all things appeared to favor us, and even the brown, outworn aspect of sombre Gubbio upon its stone ledge was warmed and cheered by the June sunshine. We left it regretfully, for a third visit had still further endeared it to us, and as we slowly ascended the rocky cleft that led us away from it we promised ourselves to return to it yet again.

We climbed higher and higher and gradually emerged from the deep shadows of the ravine. Grassy slopes

rolled away from us on either side, forming an interval between us and more abrupt peaks rising further away. And now the oxen were brought into requisition, trampling heavily down from a high-pitched *podere* whence they were lent. They matter-of-factly stood to be made fast to our carriage-tongue in front of the horses, and at the word of the *contadino* who accompanied them bent their sturdy strength to tugging us upward. The horses still conscientiously tried to do their share, but they might well have spared themselves, for our big leaders made nothing of us and looked as though they could have added the weight of the horses to that of the vehicle and its occupants with absolute unconcern.

Wider and wider views spread themselves before us, nor as we proceeded did we feel inclined to agree with travelers who complain of the desolation and barrenness of the Apennines. Those of us familiar with treeless mountains have been taught the secret of the beauty of an arid landscape, the colors with which the morning and evening can paint uncovered heights, the atmospheric magic not to be worked upon a background of foliage. Besides, even if there are sterile altitudes aloft, cultivation is carried up to the last foothold afforded, and here and there rugged little stone cottages lend a friendly inhabited air, the patches of soil about them neatly kept and blossoming forth into productive greenness.

But the whole day's journey is not at the same elevation and when we had taken leave of our oxen we bowled down into valleys of enchantment where a beryl-green river coquetted with us for many miles, advancing and receding as we met it or withdrew from it, compelled by the windings of the road. Sometimes it flowed against wonderful pink rocks almost unreal in their rosy tint, and here the cottages were built of blocks of it, looking as though the warm pigment had been laid on the surface

after construction. And now we were traveling upon one of the immemorial roads that led to Rome, the great Flaminian Way. It made us old to think of it and yet it renewed youth, too, to see it looking as though built yesterday. Then came the Furlo Pass, that splendid gash cut by Vespasian through the mountains, between whose warm mahogany-colored sides we followed the now noisy river boiling in its bed far below the level of the road.

It was not long after leaving the pass behind that as we crept along the valley our driver first pointed out Urbino, up against the sky, upon the highest and furthest ridge in sight and looking as though it must command the width of Italy. After this we were perhaps two hours more in reaching it, gradually ascending bench after bench of the altitude till we stopped at its imposing gate, to be questioned by the customs official. The conversation at this point is usually something as follows:

"What have you with you?"

"Nothing subject to duty."

"What is in this hamper?"

"Clothing that has been worn."

"Have you any spirits with you, or anything to eat?"

"Nothing."

After which the officer touches his cap politely and you are permitted to drive on—a curious ceremony, to be gone through with at the gate of every city.

A gentleman who goes out for a day's fishing in the country must pay a duty upon his basket when he returns. Every peasant bringing his vegetables to sell within the walls must yield up the amount of the tax, and I have seen a barefooted old woman entering with a poor bundle of grass upon her head which she had cut beside the road, stopped while an iron rod was thrust through

and through her burden lest it might conceal a fragment of food. Again, if you wished to carry some provisions with you upon a trip that led through several towns, you would be obliged to pay at every gate, and if chance led you at last to carry them home again unconsumed, another duty would be demanded at the very threshold you first carried them over!

But having been made free of Urbino we thought no more of the unhappy restrictions of the present, for were we not upon storied ground? The city climbs the last heights of the mountain and rises steeply from pitch to pitch. As you enter you may look over the low parapet on the right down to the *pallone* ground and upon the left up to the Ducal Palace above your head. Scarcely anywhere else have you the feeling of being so raised aloft and yet within a city. As you look down from its pinnacle, rank after rank the grass-covered folds of mountain-ranges slope away in every direction as far as the eye can reach. Even here where cities seek the loftiest positions, instead of the flat plain, must it not give a sense of vantage, a certain feeling of superiority over the dwellers on humble ground, to look out thus over the world and see it descending and falling back whichever way one turns the eye? To look ever down upon the sun-bathed valleys below and detect the glint of a winding river, or the white line of a highway from the watch-tower of one's dwelling among the clouds?

I do not know if it would promote high thoughts and a detachment from all trivial and vulgar things, but I cannot say that the inhabitants of Urbino looked very different from those occupying a less favored position. Ours, however, was too short an acquaintance to penetrate below the surface. As we sat on the low parapet above the *pallone* ground in the late afternoon we had opportunity for seeing the aristocracy of the city, to

whom the time and place offered an occasion for promenading. Staid mothers of families in rustling silks with daughters beside them, or younger fathers and mothers with a group of little ones, handsome young officers in the most shining of military uniforms, slowly filed by, or found places upon the parapet to chat and watch the game going on below. Groups of acquaintances met, introductions were extended, cordial encounters and animated conversations took place.

It was pleasant to look on and almost form a part of this easy out-of-door social life, and yet the spectacle was a very modern one, and it required a certain effort not to be querulous at seeing how far Urbino had advanced beyond the fifteenth century with which one always associates it. We tried to content ourselves with hearing fragments of the cheerful chatter going on about us, and looking at the *pallone* players in their white costumes as they vigorously hurled the ball, or struck it back with the curious contrivance which at a little distance resembles a pine-cone.

It was not till the next morning that we turned our backs upon the present in the empty silent piazza before the Ducal Palace and reverently crossed the threshold of the past, as we entered the echoing halls of the famous pile. We were told that it was now a government residence, and we knew that somewhere within it lurked the ancient archives of the city, but neither fact gave it animation. To us it appeared as solitary as though no one had ever inhabited its faded *salons* since the lovely Elizabetta Gonzaga, with all her wit and charm, disappeared from the scene of her gentle triumphs. Fancy easily busied herself in filling the halls with that princely court of Montefeltro, once the model of its time. A ceiling with its color nearly obliterated, a beautifully wrought marble mantel, a bit of graceful

carving—upon these one must build up the luxury that once reigned here, when tapestry and cloth-of-gold draped the walls, when bronze, marble and costly pictures crowded the rooms, when books of the best and rarest were everywhere, and amidst all that was rich and exquisite moved wit and beauty, the stalwart warrior, the subtle priest, the impassioned poet.

Here Tasso declaimed his verse; here Raphael and Titian painted; here Bibbiena's witticisms delighted applauding groups, and courtly Bembo discoursed of love. Now it is as bare as when the infamous Borgia looted and left it, carrying away its priceless treasures to the Vatican.

On the morning of our departure, and too late, alas! for extended intercourse, I made acquaintance with one of the most fascinating dwellers in Urbino. It was upon a street corner where I loitered while the horses were being harnessed to take us away. The more active people of the town bustled to and fro about their morning concerns, the leisurely chatted in groups or occupied chairs drawn well out upon the pavement. No one was irritated at being obliged to walk round them. Foot-passengers are expected to be accommodating in a country where the household life overflows at every turn into the streets. Spinning, sewing and knitting are not carried on in the unsociable retirement of house interiors. The family clothes-lines, for example, often occupy the whole width of the sidewalk, where there is any, for quite a distance, while pedestrians step off, and, picking their way among the horses, amiably circumnavigate such obstructions.

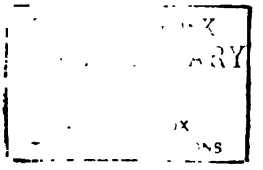
Idly watching the scene before me, a few flute-like notes caused me to turn my head, and there from out a cage hanging against the rough wall two bright eyes were gazing at me in friendly invitation, as I liked to think. I instantly

approached and saw that the cage held a young nightingale. The tiny creature displayed no uneasiness as I came close to him, but rather seemed to advance a little to meet me. I spoke to him and he hastened to respond. In the warmth of the early morning sun he was trying his voice, practicing upon those infinitesimal but miraculous vocal chords that nothing human can imitate.

Times and seasons were nothing to him in the discovery of his powers. Later, perhaps, he would confine his perfected song to the closing hours of the day and the mysterious night; but now there was no time to lose, he must experiment, and he yearned for appreciation. I murmured encouragement and he leaned toward me, palpitating with life, longing for sympathy. He half raised and fluttered his wings, he turned his head from side to side, he puffed out his little feathered breast, while the sweetest half-whispered sounds, with starts and pauses and broken cadences welled forth. When he hesitated for a moment I softly urged and incited, and again he threw himself into the rapture of expression, and notes gay or plaintive bubbled out. His excitement grew, he tried higher flights. If inexperience mocked him it but stimulated him to greater effort. He swayed his little body and stretched his neck upward in a very ecstasy of desire. It was too human—there was heart-break in it. This diminutive being had a soul as surely as though it were not confined within the limits of a bird's body.

Why, oh why, I have often asked myself since, did I so soon relinquish companionship with that confiding little songster! I could have spent happy hours with him, yet I hurried away to Pesaro to look at an embrowned Bellini madonna in a bad light. What though the figs of Pesaro are renowned and there are dead manuscripts and carvings of old ivory in the museum? What were these things to the presence of my beguiling little bird?

Gubbio to Urbino. Approaching the Furlo Pass.



Thus it is that we hesitate to sacrifice the intended, the usual, to some sudden opportunity that is but half recognized, and lay up for ourselves pangs of regret.

The descent from Urbino to Pesaro, where it lies upon the seashore, takes but two and a half hours. Your driver, a pleasant rascal, assures you that it takes three or four, and so you agree to pay him the twenty *lire*, which is far too high a price. But you forget your chagrin at being outwitted in the sweetness of the landscape and the joyous motion over the smooth roads that carry you aslant toward the Adriatic.

THE SHORE OF THE ADRIATIC

"Vassi in Sanlèo, e discendesi in Noli;
Montasi su Bismantova in cacume
Con esso i piè: ma qui convien ch'uom voli."
— PURGATORIO; IV, 25.

IN an ancient copy of Dennistoun's Dukes of Urbino there is an old-fashioned steel-engraving of San Leo. It is portrayed with the usual liberty taken in the engravings of that time. At the top of an impossible elevation stand as many buildings as it may accommodate conformably with perfect proportion and picturesqueness, while sloping to the plain below reaches a path in beautifully even zigzags of about forty-five degrees incline. At the bottom it meets a broad river which possesses every advantage of bold shore and abundant foliage, while on the opposite bank rises an elevation only less striking in altitude but seemingly minus any possibility of approach to the dwellings on its summit.

On a youthful imagination this picture made a vivid impression. Was it possible that in the Old World, as wondrous and as far off as the stars, such a castle hung suspended in the air? What adventure of arms was gallant enough to accord with it? What romance of love

thrilling enough to befit it? Surely its history must offer blood-stirring pages.

Some search revealed that as far back as the Roman time its summit was chosen for a temple to Jupiter, the Subduer of Enemies, and that with the next era it became the abode of a most Christian hermit, around whose cell the first cluster of houses grew up and who was in the end sanctified by canonization. But these verities, naked of details, though properly enriching its background, were too vague to satisfy the fancy, and it was not till the time of King Berengar that the halo of romance distinctly settled upon the head of San Leo. There seemed a fitness in the fact that in the tenth century, that gloomiest period of her dark ages, the last king of Italy should take his stand upon the rock of San Leo, there to make his final and losing struggle against the German Otho.

Even in riper times the aureole did not fade quite away from San Leo, and the longing sometime to see it remained laid away in a mental corner, only awaiting the occasion to be brought forth and transmuted into a realization. The hour came while we were in Rimini. It had been a disappointment that we could not draw near to Rimini by the more deferential or at least appropriate means of horses and carriage. To take a railway train jarred upon the feelings with which one approached the stage whereon certain of the most striking dramas of the Middle Ages unrolled themselves, though it might well enough be in conformity with present conditions; and one must needs confess that there is disillusion also in the arrival. Lying flat upon the plain, close to the sea, and yet not making its shore an important feature, it is too modern, too commonplace, and the few monuments of its past that remain are isolated and stand far apart, without even the support of proximity to yield an

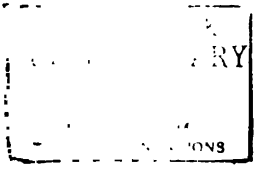
atmosphere reassuring to one another and consoling to the pilgrim. We could discover no memorials of that unhappy Francesca, who, tricked and duped to her heart's undoing, came here to meet the cutting-off of her life and the tragedy of that eternity which has been made the more real of the two to us.

No doubt we ought to have been thankful that the era of blood and violence was over, that this battle-ground of brutal passions and ferocious strivings was transformed into a mild industrious community. We should have been glad to hear of the lucrative silk industry and the promenade for summer bathers on the beach, yet such is the selfishness of those who are bent on seeking out the shrines of the past that we turned a deaf ear to the vulgar prosperity of its present and openly mourned the unfilial blotting out of its cruel, tumultuous, throbbing past.

MALATESTA ARMS.

But at least, in the gratifying seclusion of an unfrequented quarter, under a gray, dripping sky, there stood that strangest of all churches, symbol of a Christian faith, and decently dedicated to Saint Francis, yet insolently made the altar of a passion that for years defied human law and flaunted itself before eyes to which its presence was a daily insult. Openly enough it was called the Temple of the Malatestas, that race of tyrants, wilful, indomitable, violent, who ruled Rimini; and the emblems of Sigismondo and the beautiful Isotta appear everywhere within it. It was with a sort of fearful joy that we gazed at the medallions of the man who was a type of all that was most monstrous and terrible in the incredible combinations of character that the Renaissance

San Leo. The Engraving from Dennistoun.



produced. In the slanting shape of the head, the curious compression of the nose, the unusual flatness and length of the eyes, we looked for the signs of that nature whose forceful precocity took charge of an army and won a battle at thirteen; that ruled a province thereafter; that fought for other princes in the custom of that day, but was ruled by treachery rather than by fidelity. We searched the expression of the being who was the cruel tyrant of many, yet (such was his passion for learning and his interest in encouraging the arts) the submissive pupil of a handful of pedants; whose lawless, abnormal nature was convicted of almost every open outrage and nameless crime, and yet who through it all remained true, in his way, to the love of one woman, whom he postponed again and again to ambitious schemes, but whom he always leaned upon and who was often the regent and protector of his city.

The elephant and the rose, chosen emblems of Sigismondo and Isotta, look down from the enduring marble; their ciphers and coats-of-arms appear undisguisedly in the arabesque ornamentation of balustrade and screen; their tombs are the monuments for which all exists. The decency of the nineteenth century appears to have obliterated the ribald epitaph which the disdainful Sigismondo caused to be inscribed upon his; but the billowy angels, the troops of singing children, the sea beasts, the fanciful riot of festooned garland and classic embellishment remain, and carry the eye from chapel to chapel, from panel to panel, in wonder and bewilderment. And here in the midst of it all once sat the beautiful and learned Isotta, in the pomp of the triumphal dedication that opened this amazing shrine, which mocked Christianity in its celebration of her and her lover. What were her thoughts as she gazed upon the spectacle prepared for her, what her feelings as her eyes fell upon the hapless

wife, who may well have been present, too, and whose existence made all the glory of the homage offered to Isotta and the exaltation of her proud position empty to her? As it was then, unfinished but hurriedly prepared for a special date, it remains to-day, and with the centuries the wonder of it grows no less.

In the evening hours at the hotel the proprietor brought for our diversion the ponderous bulk of an extended history of Rimini. Some perusal of it disclosed the aim of the author to be such wholesale whitewashing of the character of Sigismondo as appeared to throw the onus of misrepresentation on all other historians.

ELEPHANT AND ROSE.

Besides this temple there is the fortress-palace of the Malatestas, standing on the outer edge of the city and now used as a prison. It stands as proudly as ever, with the soft spring grass caressing the rough stones of its base and sweeping away in a stretch of even sward before it. We stopped to gaze at it early the next day as we took our way toward San Leo. I do not know whether it was the invigoration of the limpid morning air or the exultation that pervades the heart in the achievement of a long desire, but as we advanced the feeling was of being swept along and upward, quite independent of such aids as carriage-wheels and soberly trotting horses.

A wide trough-like valley opens itself into the mountains back of Rimini and is filled in with a waving growth of cultivation. Sometimes the succulent green

is recognizable to foreign eyes and sometimes not, but it is all beautiful. On the left, skyward, hangs stout little San Marino, that tiny republic whose survival through ages of change and violence is matter for speculation and marvel; and on both sides rise height after height of rocky peaks, pushing out of the green below. After a while the horses no longer trot, but labor patiently up steeper inclines, and as the green thins and the mountain-ribs protrude themselves, little stony groups of cottages, rough excrescences on the wayside, peer down at one. But if the exterior is rough-hewn and austere the love of beauty rests within, for on the window-sills stand pots of carnations (that dear delight of the Italian heart) stretching forth their slim, angular stems and ruddy blooms to the sunlight.

At last, round the shoulder of a hill, San Leo comes suddenly into sight: strange little wind-swept town, set high up in the eye of heaven, like Simon Stylites upon his column. We observed it for a while across an intervening gap and had time to compare it with the steel-engraving. There were differences. The majestic river had in some way entirely disappeared, the symmetrical approach in the form of a trestle-like zigzag was also absent and replaced by a road cut into the cliff, but winding round it. There were alterations in the disposal of buildings at the top, while as for its companion peak, instead of being but a stone's throw away, it had receded to a distance of some miles. These, however, were minor considerations; we were not disposed to complain; San Leo was not disappointing.

Set in a country of curious geologic formation, it is the boldest, most salient point in its vicinity, where waves of green surge up into crests of stone and peaks and obelisks of rock rise suddenly out of rolling mountain valleys, velvety with herbage. It is the very stronghold

to have withstood a siege and looks as though it must have been impregnable to all but treachery. Highest of all and occupying all the space on its pinnacle, stands the castle, as usual now a prison; and our driver pointed out the place where one poor wretch, who had in some way managed to obtain and secrete a rope, had swung himself off in a frantic effort for freedom that proved but a plunge to death, for in his ignorance he had miscalculated the depth and was dashed to pieces below. On the ledge under the fortress hangs the town, gray and weather-beaten, a handful of houses, but with its little cathedral, and in the centre of its piazza a fine fountain, full to overflowing with pure water. The existence of such a spring nearly at the top of a crag like this is one of its most surprising features.

The corrupting influence of tourists is seldom felt at San Leo, so guides and beggars are happily absent. But there is no lack of little boys who are quite ready to accept the remnants of the travelers' luncheon; and it is well to consume that refection sitting on the outer boundary, where there lies a convenient grassy terrace and the eye can travel for leagues over the face of the lonely, beautiful country. One finds the little cathedral worthy of investigation and may certainly do worse than to sit for a while by the fountain, watching the stray citizens of San Leo who pause there and who appear to have learned the lesson of unhasting calm in their exalted niche overhanging the world.

Then there is the bustle of horses being put to and the carriage made ready for the fleeting visitors' return to the lower earth, though even this creates hardly an eddy in the serenity of San Leo. And so down and away again toward the sea, with new lights and shadows playing subtle changes upon the sweet landscape and the heart full of peace and precious memories.

Rimini The Castle.

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RAVENNA.

"Mellowed by scutcheoned panes in cloisters old,
Seclusions ivy-hushed, and pavements sweet
With immemorial lisp of musing feet."

LOWELL. *Agassiz.*

On the way to Ravenna we consulted together in regard to a choice between its two hotels.

"Shall we take the Hotel Byron?" said I.

"Go to a hotel with an English name in Italy!" exclaimed the youngest of our party with disdain, taking up her Baedeker. "Listen to this—Albergo Spada d'Oro e San Marco [Hotel of the Golden Sword and Saint Mark]; that is evidently the place for us."

However, in the end the fact that a garden was promised with the Byron turned the scale and we soon found its name to be the only thing about it which was English, for, though serving as a hotel now, it is in reality the Palazzo Rasponi, home of an old and famous family. As for the garden, though not large, it is as delightful as old Italian gardens always are, where so much is often made of a limited space and effects are produced in unexpected ways. It is full of arbors, fountains, old statues, beautiful bits of carved marble and shady retreats where high hedges give privacy to seats for reading, resting or taking tea. A tower rises nearly in the centre and great linden-trees mass their shade here and there, while at this season flowers spring everywhere.

Just outside the gate is Dante's tomb, once, perhaps, beautiful and appropriate, but now spoiled by the withering touch of the restorer. Abroad in the town there is quiet and emptiness everywhere, and we walk through the echoing galleries or sit gazing at ancient mosaics in the cool semi-darkness of churches, with never a tourist

in sight. Numbers of travelers come here, no doubt, but perhaps not many think of choosing the middle of June to visit a place which has such a reputation for deadly malaria. Whether we are unwise or not, certain it is that good fortune is giving us faultless weather, and in Ravenna the coming and going of strangers and the chatter of sight-seers would be sadly out of character now in the long afternoon of its desertion and decay.

To saunter in its grass-grown streets and tarry in the solemn retirement of its hoary edifices, undisturbed by the idle and the undevout, invites one's imagination to play at leisure over the long backward stretch of its kaleidoscopic history and to revert to the magnificence of its prime when it was a mighty seaport, seat of the Adriatic fleet, an archiepiscopal see and an imperial residence. Now the sea that once washed its opulent wharves and piers has withdrawn from it, its teeming harbor is silted up by the wide-reaching deposits of the Po, and only a sluggish canal some miles in length connects the city with its retreating shore-line. If in its changed life of to-day there is a centre of trade, an animated gathering place for the inhabitants, we have not seen it, nor do we seek it. It would be to break the spell of the contemplative revery in which it seems to sit and dream through the years.

At noon of a true June day a little boy opened for us the wicket in the rural enclosure that now surrounds the tomb of Theodoric, with its ponderous dome cut from a single gigantic block of stone. It stands beyond the city gates and lay bathed in pure sunshine and surrounded by a still green garden of low-growing things that offered little obstruction to light and warmth. Among the shrubs a subdued twittering could be heard, sweet, low notes conversationally murmured. The little guide smiled at a question proffered and showed a

friendly knowledge of these gentle tenants. Yes, they were nightingales; he knew the nests, but they must not be approached now. The mothers were busy with their young. Here they could breed undisturbed. Earlier in the spring, then, when the unbroken moonlight lay reflected upon this ancient dome, their delicious melody filled the night. For such a rapture would it not be worth while to brave for once the lurking miasma of this plain?

Once the lower arches of Theodoric's resting-place stood in dank pools of stagnant water, but now the firm ground looks innocent enough. At any rate it was pleasant to know that the birds had a friend and ally in the sturdy little son of the custodian. Within, the untenanted structure was swept and garnished. Centuries ago pious Romanists scattered his unhallowed dust, that they might sanctify his resting-place to their own form of worship, and no one knows what wind dispersed the ashes of the mighty Gothic king before whom thousands once cowered. But here, year after year, do nightingales chant his requiem.

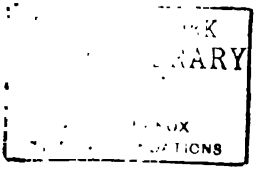
What conscientious students study most in Ravenna is, of course, the mosaics. Not being conscientious, I only sit before them and enjoy them as a revelation of rich, harmonious color. Where dull gold mixes with deep blue, which melts into peacock green, it can yield a pleasure quite apart from that afforded by the anxious identification of attenuated, goggle-eyed figures and bewildering symbols. But neither would I be flippantly disrespectful toward the researches of those wiser and more serious than I. Certainly, there must be a deep interest in tracing the development of that art which grew up here without the overshadowing influence of the presence of famous Greek and Roman buildings, or the proximity of pagan temples to be despoiled, and which has left us such a

curious mixture from the Roman, Gothic and Byzantine periods.

With addition and interchange (for, robbing Peter to pay Paul, certain things have been rifled from one church to add to the adornments of another) it is possible to look at the relics of the fifth century in contrast with the smooth prettiness of Guido Reni, and the occasional mingling of Christian and pagan representation must cause a smile. For instance, there is a baptism of Christ, in which the river god of the Jordan figures as a spectator, and in one little church Abraham and Sarah sit at table decorously entertaining the three angels, while not far off a bit of Greek relief shows the shell-bedecked throne of Neptune and its attendant genii. Daniel, too, from the lion's den may gaze across at the apotheosis of a Roman emperor.

But though the churches are many, one could hardly spare a glimpse at least of each, and always there is the temptation to stop and follow the leaf design of a capital, or smile over the peculiarities of animals and birds evolved by a sixth century imagination. But at last one always returns to the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where in the tempered light all those harmonies of color spoken of before give one renewed happiness. The single altar is of oriental alabaster, constructed so that lights may be placed within to throw a soft radiance through the exquisite translucence of the stone. The enormous sarcophagus of Galla Placidia, in which one fancies her as still seated, upright and rigid, towers above those on either side of her, where repose two of the Roman emperors. Curious to record, a pair of humbler size, and at a respectful distance, contain the ashes of two tutors to the imperial family. It is enough to make the least serious ponder upon the mutability of earthly things, to remember that in spite of the power and the pomp of Rome, the impe-

Ravenna. Garden of Palazzo Rasponi.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rial coffins grouped round Galla Placidia are the only ones still standing where they were first deposited.

In the cathedral is the ivory throne of Saint Maximian, whose beautiful mellow-toned surface it is a pleasure for the eye to rest upon, and this sacred edifice is the sepulchral repository of so many great fathers of the church that nine reverend bishops have been obliged to share a single sarcophagus under the high altar.

At the *museo* there is much to occupy those untrammeled by time. I liked the poetical proximity of the decretals of Boniface VIII to the wooden coffin in which the remains of his great enemy were found, but I lingered longest beside the monument upon which is the recumbent figure of that beautiful and gracious young warrior who since his last battle lies in such serene repose. A few years ago he had another name, but I trust it may be that he is truly Guidarello Guidarelli, that hero of Ravenna around whose name such romance clings.

Southward from Ravenna, following the seashore, stretch the long lines of the Pineta, that storied pine wood haunted by spectral shapes of the past. But only at night can they now venture to pace beneath its shelter, for if ever in the daytime it furnished a shade sufficiently sombre, it is now too cheerful, too hospitable to sun and breeze to harbor ghostly frequenters. I do not like to hear it called "ruined." Whatever ravages frost and fire may have inflicted upon it are not evident now, though it is thinned of many trees, and it is as sweet a place to idle away happy hours in as may be found. The plumes of stone-pines expand in the warm sunshine overhead and pungent delicious odors rise from the varied undergrowth beneath. A slow-moving stream, with low dyked banks grown over with green, finds its way to the sea here, and in its course mirrors the trees on its margin.

By starlight one might, perhaps, meet the brooding

figure of Dante, who was wont to walk here in the last years of his life, coming out to the stillness of these woods from the asylum of that noble and friendly house which honored itself by affording him protection. It is said that the one member of that family whom he has made all men since love and pity, Francesca da Polenta, then dead, had been known to him earlier in her innocent and winning girlhood, and it was at this time that the lines which have made her immortal were written by the great poet and read by the grief-stricken father. A tablet opposite Dante's tomb now somewhat uncertainly marks a fragment of wall said to have been part of the palace of the Polentani, but neither in Ravenna nor in Rimini is there much left that one may identify as connected with that piteous history.

When we left Ravenna it was to drive on through Forlì to Faenza, which we had thought might be easily accomplished in an afternoon. But it is never well to begin such a transit in the afternoon, lest you find on the route what will cause you to mourn the day's brevity. When the Adriatic withdrew from Ravenna the country about it gradually became a desolate, unhealthy marsh, but this has since been reclaimed by draining and dyking and now forms vast rice-fields. The road, lifted to quite a high level above, gives extended views over them, and at this time numbers of women are at work in them, although the labor is as ill suited as possible to our sex.

Strange amorphous beings they appeared, women to the waist line and men below. Instead of inventing a suitable and comfortable costume for the exigencies of their work, they have preferred to retain the usual bodice and add to it unmitigated masculine trousers, which in turn they roll up to the knees as they stand in the water among the rice-stalks. A kerchief knotted over the head completes their attire. Beside the road, opposite

the place where a number of them were working, stood a row of baskets, each one with the owner's temporarily discarded petticoats neatly folded lying upon it, together with an umbrella. These umbrellas, by the way, are not the dark, monotonous articles they have become with us. Pea-green ones are common; salmon color is to be seen, and blue ones often have gay striped borders six inches deep at the edge. The workers did not look depressed in mind or lacking in health; on the contrary, strong and in good spirits; and the sound of their cheerful chatter followed us for some distance along the highway.

It was curious to observe how mile after mile brought the level of the road and that of the surrounding fields nearer together till at length they met, and the rice-fields ceased. Villas began to look out between groves of trees, and everywhere were stretches of grain and lines of mulberry-trees. We met long processions of slow-moving carts, heaped with big empty baskets, on their return journey from some further town whither the business of silk culture had taken them; and at length we rolled into Forlì, that little city looking so peacefully industrious now, but once the scene of as exciting and romantic a bit of history as can be found in Italian annals of the fifteenth century. Here was the stage upon which the tempestuous drama of Caterina Sforza's life was played, that typical heroine of her time, wise and astute, beautiful and loving, cruel and vengeful.

The wide-spreading piazza, with the beautiful *campanile* of San Mercuriale springing from its southern side, lay mildly basking in the afternoon sun, with as placid an air as though it had never run red with blood when Caterina tortured the murderers of her lover there. Beyond it stretched a street whose long arcaded curve terminated at the Porta Ravaldino and the famous citadel. That, too, seemed to have forgotten its belligerent

days and to have sleepily settled a little further into the soft turf that surrounded it, where a few goats lazily cropped the fresh grass-blades and great linden-trees in full bloom filled the air with their fragrance.

Sending the carriage to wait for us at the inn, we strolled from point to point and at last sought out the quiet church of San Biagio, in a moss-grown corner to which many turnings brought us. We desired to see Caterina portrayed in its frescoes. It was closed and at first our knockings brought no one, but a louder and more prolonged assault finally roused an old woman who came forth, full of duckings and apologies. On receiving our eager instructions and a few small coins, she at once agreed to go for the sacristan and ambled off at a rate of speed astonishing in one of her years. The sacristan presently appeared, bearing the heavy key, and let us in just in time to catch the last rays of light that would serve to show us Palmezzano's Madonna, adored by the whole Riario family.

We stood some minutes looking at the picture, and as we were turning from it my eye fell upon a singularly beautiful tomb in a niche in the opposite wall. The sacristan helped me to pick out the half-intelligible inscription and finished out the story. A nobleman of a famous family had a young and beautiful wife. He idolized her, but he listened to evil tongues and believed her untrue to him; so in the fashion of those days, when no one doubted that justice and retribution lay in the hands of the husband, he put an end to her by poison.

After she was dead he found that his suspicions were unfounded. She had been cruelly wronged, and in all her gentleness and innocence he had murdered her. What could he do? He built for her the most beautiful tomb that could be devised and upon its cold marble

Ravenna. The Pineta.

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engraved the praise of all her virtue and her loveliness. So there she lies, a slender, girlish figure — she was only twenty-two. Her sweet, childlike face is turned a little to one side; her pretty arms, with the puffed sleeves stopping just above the elbow, extended and the slender hands crossed; her little feet just showing below the hem of her brocaded gown. All about and below her exquisite designs, garlands and cherubs and curious devices of the fifteenth century.

Her husband came often to this place and did long and bitter penance in the monastery behind the church. What were his thoughts as he knelt beside the monument he had reared? Did he live to grow old, with grief and remorse ever gnawing at his heart? I have seen his portrait; at least I hold that I have, and I shall take care not to prove myself in the wrong. In Venice, in the richest private collection there and one of the richest in the world, hangs the portrait of a man somewhat past middle age. His body is in profile and the hands are raised and folded in prayer, but the face, framed in its gray hair and beard, looks directly out of the canvas and the grave eyes meet yours with the fixed inscrutable look of one who does not invite compassion, nor offer to share with any one the secret of the torture which led him to be perpetuated thus, supplicating the mercy of his God.

SIENA AND THE PALIO

" O gracious city well beloved,
Italian, and a maiden crowned,
Siena, my feet are no more moved
Toward thy strange-shapen mountain bound:
But my heart in me turns and moves,
O lady, loveliest of my loves,
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet
And gaze from thy fair fountain seat
Up the sheer street!"

— SWINBURNE. *Siena.*

THIS little city so endears itself to those who know it that it is easy to understand the feelings of people who, coming unsuspectingly within the circle of its spell, drop gently from the nineteenth century to, say, the fifteenth, and stay on here for years, only occasionally visiting the outer world. Of such I know a few and suspect the existence of many more.

There is a gentle English lady here, for example, who is the guest of the old and noble family of the Piccolomini, as indeed any one may be who enters the *pension* which occupies one of its ancestral floors. She dwells with her books and her piano in certain rooms of their palace whose windows command one of the fairest prospects in Tuscany; and I know of nothing pleasanter of a

moonlight night which is working its magic upon the balustraded terraces below and the shadowy stretches of garden, field and hill beyond, than to listen to the music with which she adds the last touch of feeling and poetry to what is all but perfect already. She is so diffident that her strains must be listened to almost by stealth, yet once seated at her instrument she cannot withhold herself, but pours her heart out, and the indiscreet keyboard does not keep quite all her secrets. She gives many hours to her playing. She walks over miles of beautiful country. She attends the fine courses of lectures that one may here have admittance to, and she has such kind and helpful relations as her shyness will permit with those Italians with whom she comes in contact. Perhaps her life is as useful, as well as happy, here as it could be anywhere. It is certain that if one's income be slender one may live on incredibly little in Siena, and for an absurdly small sum even become the temporary proprietor of a historic *palazzo* and a train of servitors.

Upon this visit we arrived in Siena in the late afternoon and passed from the little railway station outside the walls into the warm, dark brown ravines of its streets, from whose narrow windings the waning light was already screened, though still touching the roofs and towers above. There are no gaps between the unbroken ranks of these stone and brick palaces of five hundred years ago, and the solid fronts, with no meaner and lower buildings between, follow the waving lines which the streets and piazzas take. So we threaded them till from the point where we entered we came to the opposite edge of the compactly built city and emerged upon the little piazza we sought, from the boundary of whose parapet the ground fell away to a tangle of gardens and greenery that stretched to the outer wall of the town. Here stood our *pension*, well exposed to the air and sun.

Upon two sides lies a garden with high, closely trimmed hedges of bay and gravel walks between beds of flowers. Along the walls are tall shrubs of the camelia covered with flowers, not one or two here and there, but hundreds of brilliant blossoms, lavish masses of color, covering the bushes and carpeting the ground with fallen petals. This alluring pleasance, however, belongs to the lower story, and we can only survey it from above with vain desire, as *forestieri* are not invited to enter it. I fancy, however, that the owner, who is described as a sort of parsimonious recluse, does not enjoy it half as much as we do who hover above it, hanging out over our broad window-sills in the morning or watching the glimmering of a thousand fireflies as they flit among its alleys at night.

Oh, what a peaceful, lovely bit of Tuscany lies before these same windows! First there are glimpses on either side of old palaces, with their terraces and gardens, half concealed by grape trellises or twisted fig-trees. Then come unenclosed vegetable gardens, broken into tiny patches or irregular rows of one herb or another and dotted with their shallow open water supplies—circular basins of stone and cement from which the water is laboriously dipped and poured upon the beds when showers are withheld. Next is the gray old city wall, wandering up and down over the irregular contour of the land, and beyond, sunny rolling hills clothed with vines and olives, while smooth roads travel temptingly off into the country, passing an occasional farmhouse or monastery.

Within our *pension*, the Casa Rigoni, is quiet comfort and much human interest; indeed, a diverting volume might be written solely upon foreign *pensions*, for they abound in material for the observer. One feels safe in calling this the best in Siena, so pleasant is

Siena. The Mangia Tower.

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one's stay made, so helpful and kindly an interest is taken in one's projects and desires.

Out of doors a sense of restfulness and satisfaction pervades one and it is impossible to grow weary of strolling about the streets. There is no need to search for interesting bits of antiquity, for no search is necessary. Siena is an unspoiled bit of the mediæval, and one is never in danger of coming upon a tasteless restoration or an intrusive modern addition. Glancing up as you pass along, you frequently notice the upper stories of its solemn old palaces connected by the bridge of an arched passage, partly for support to their height, but also for convenience in crossing from one to the other; and in the old days they served a special purpose. It appears that the sumptuary laws were then of the strictest, and the ladies of Siena could wear none but plain and sombre-colored garments in the street, while the law-makers might display any rich expense of costume they chose. It was unendurable! Then the curfew rang two hours after sunset, which would be half-past seven for part of the year, and no one must be in the streets thereafter. But the Sienese were fond of gayety and bright clothes (*gente vana*, as Dante unkindly called them), so putting on their silken robes and dazzling jewels, they gathered from long distances at a ball, say at one of the Piccolomini palaces, crossing bridge after bridge between the houses and so not once descending to the forbidden level of the streets.

The Piccolomini coat of arms is the one seen oftenest here, carved on the façades of the old palaces: five crescents. Once there were six, but it seems that at one time the infamous Saracens got an arm of Saint John into their possession. The Piccolomini determined to recover it and finally offered one of their crescents in exchange

for it. This was accepted and now the arm reposes in a casket in the town hall, while the Saracens have ever since flaunted the Piccolomini crescent on their banner. Besides the carved shields these palaces are enriched with beautiful wrought-iron ornaments along their fronts: lanterns, dragons, rows of torch-holders. The wrought-iron industry is carried on here still and the tinkle of it greets the returned traveler with its pleasant familiar sound from many an open doorway as he passes through the streets.

PICCOLOMINI ARMS.

One morning we walked toward the cathedral, winding our way past certain old *palazzi*, bits of which we desired to photograph, for example, that of the Magnifico, that amiable Sienese tyrant who had such playful ways, one of his pastimes being to roll the largest rocks he could move down the steep side of Monte Amiata, regardless of those of his subjects who might be passing on the roads below. The curved front of his dismembered and crumbling old palace still bears some of the most beautiful wrought-iron work in Siena, in the form of torch-holders.

Approaching the cathedral from its lowest point we stopped to notice the fine spring into the clouds that its walls take at this corner, and then fell to idling before the door of a cutter of gravestones. A new one had just been finished. Neatly set in the arched top of the slab was the small photographed vignette of a young girl, a plain, wholesome-faced daughter of the people, and below was a long inscription. How different is the Italian unreserve from our repelling reticence! They take the

whole world into their confidence even upon their tombstones. The legend on this one first dwelt upon the charms and virtues of the original of the portrait, and then proceeded to describe her as seated one morning with her work at the window of her happy home, unsuspectingly engaged in blissful anticipations of the future, when she was suddenly killed by a stroke of lightning. This stone, it continued, was raised to her memory by her parents and also by Alfred D——, thus shockingly cut short in his contemplation of the imminent joys of matrimony. The sun slanting in lay in a shining yellow bar across Alfred's name and seemed to support him in calling upon the world to join in his artless and impassioned regret.

But the sun does not always shine in Siena, and if when it does the best hay is to be made by rambling in the streets, the next best is to love and delight in the pictures of the Sienese masters. On cold wet afternoons, with the help of the Golden Urn, we pursue them into out-of-the-way churches and concealed chapels, or we beguile the custodian of the *academia* into leaving us to occupy the solitary halls of the chilly little gallery till long after the hour for closing. He sits tolerantly in the vestibule with sometimes one or two of his prattling children to keep him company, and does not grow impatient since he has learned that we do not forget to reward him for thus indulging us.

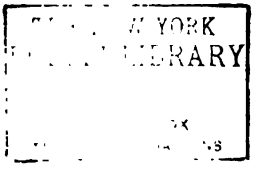
Sometimes, still in the pursuit of pictures, we summon a whole neighborhood to our aid. One morning we were bent upon seeing a certain Madonna by Neroccio dei Landi, and when at last our *vetturino*, climbing up a steep stone-paved *vicolo*, had found the place, it was locked. He left us in the carriage at an unpleasant angle upon the uneven flags while he went first to inquire where the key could be found and afterwards to look for the custo-

dian. The first being accomplished with the assistance of all the population in sight, he disappeared round a corner, and presently a rosy, breathless girl came hurrying with the key and we were admitted into the somewhat mouldy little sanctuary. We were then conveyed by winding ways to a tiny upper chamber where upon the wall hung our picture.

Was the little canvas worth all this effort? Without a doubt; for to devotees of Neroccio dei Landi no trouble seems too great when searching out the rare works of this master. Difficulty but spurs pursuit, and when later on the same day, in the formal splendor of one of the most solid and magnificent of the Sienese palaces, we found ourselves almost baffled, we but sought the more vigorously. They were there, the two little pictures we desired, yet they looked not down from the walls as we walked through room after room hung with indifferent canvases. There was no catalogue. The custodian had never heard of Neroccio dei Landi, but at last, resting upon the floor, half concealed by a marble carving, we espied them. There could be no mistake: examples of a beautiful individual art, there is no such thing as confusing them.

Neroccio was satisfied to produce the same virginal type over and over, with little variation of surrounding or accompaniment. His sweet Madonnas, fair and dove-like, winning but unmoved, look out at us from their pure pale coloring with an expression not rapt and yet unworldly. They are hardly conscious of the child, either sleeping or eagerly stretching forth its hands to be caressed. They dwell in a stainless revery apart from all the troublous ebb and flow of life, the ignoble goading of earthly motives, and they seem to hold the secret of a peace that may be communicated to a worshiper who listens long and lovingly.

Siena. Palazzo Grotanelli.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THE PALIO.

The heat of midsummer in Siena is tempered by winds which blow freshly across the city so that one may remain late enough to see the Palio, its important *festa*, without risk of great discomfort. These renowned races were instituted many hundred years ago and it affords the sentimental traveler deep satisfaction to know that they are still kept up in the same way, with customs and costumes unaltered, and as the city itself has changed less than most places in the world, everything lends itself to the illusion that we have been privileged to step back and take part in a mediæval celebration.

The Sienese early dedicated themselves especially to the Blessed Virgin and the races are run in her honor, so that they have a pious association which we are unaccustomed to connect with festivals of the kind. They take place twice a year, on the second of July and the sixteenth of August, the latter occasion being the more important as it is Assumption Day, and so the high festival of the *Civitas Virginis*. It is looked forward to during the whole year, and the night before scores of bonfires burn on the hills far and near.

The great Piazza del Campo, where it takes place, is nearly semicircular in shape, resembling a cockle-shell and sloping gently from the curving rim toward the straight side, in the centre of which stands the municipal palace, one of the beautiful buildings of the world. The whole is stone-paved, with lines of lighter color converging toward the palace, which helps to carry out the effect. It is called a third of a mile in circumference, and it would be hard to find a more beautiful and picturesque piazza; but its unevenness, its sudden curves and steep descents, make it probably the worst race-course in the world. At the most dangerous points

mattresses are laid down to break the fall of horse or rider, for a race is seldom run without accidents. It is reassuring, however, to remember that the Blessed Virgin, although permitting the exhilaration of danger, does not allow a rider to be killed outright.

The city is divided into seventeen *contrade* or districts, each called by the name of some animal or natural object, and each having its own church and patron saint, as well as its special banners and emblems. Of these, ten may compete each year, but curiously enough not with their own horses. When from the horses offered ten have been selected as nearly corresponding in speed as possible, they are divided among the *contrade* by lot, so that no *contrada* knows till about a week before the great day whether it is to have a good or a bad horse.

The jockeys are professionals and as soon as they are secured the struggle begins. One regrets to hear that there was shameless cheating in old times, and whether the Blessed Virgin be honored or not in the observance, that custom is also kept up. Each *contrada* watches its *fantino* day and night, and every possible attempt is made to corrupt or buy him up. Somtimes two *contrade* hate a third so warmly that they agree to prevent its winning, even if they have to renounce the prize for themselves. When the race begins each jockey has a stout whip, and he is at liberty to use it on the other jockeys if he chooses as well as upon his own horse. Thus, for example, if the Tortoise and the Wolf have conspired not to let the Caterpillar win, the jockeys of the first two have been known to fall upon the third the moment the rope dropped and beat him till he fell from his horse. Thus it will be seen that there are many elements that make this race one of especial uncertainty.

Very droll stories are told of some of the horses. It seems that there was one wiry little steed who grew old in the service and won a number of banners for his *contrada*, but he was small and could not win if weighted with a rider. Accordingly the *contrada* who secured him had a bridle made of pasteboard, painted and prepared to look like leather. His *fantino* was instructed to be thrown as soon after the beginning of the race as possible and then the old horse won the race alone, for if opposing jockeys caught at his bridle it broke and came off in their hands. There are several trials or *prove* before the final race, but for the reasons already given a horse who has won easily at a *prova* or two may fail in the end.

Although only ten districts compete for the prize, all take part in the preliminary parade, and two days beforehand the banners of all the seventeen are taken to the cathedral, where they are hung up till the time for using them, and their brilliant colors light up the dim solemnity of the interior with an unwonted glow.

To see the races in the best way it is well to secure a favorable situation beforehand, and this our excellent host had providently arranged for us in a private *palazzo* carefully chosen for a cool exposure and the best view of the proceedings possible. It was therefore on the upper curve of the piazza, opposite the Palazzo Pubblico and well in view of the starting point, while opposite the exquisite shaft of the Mangia tower soared skyward. To us it was a curious thing that we, mere *forestieri*, should be admitted to a private house and permitted to occupy one of its bedchambers for a money consideration, especially as our host on this occasion was a person of wealth according to the standard of Siena. To reach the apartment reserved for us we ascended a broad staircase and entered a vast cool *salon*, whose stone floor was

overlaid with the sort of cement imitation of mosaic that modern Italians are fond of.

The light which would have entered from several tall windows was carefully tempered, and there was no crowding of furniture; all was formal, spare, dignified. From it we passed into a room where several members of the family, carefully dressed, were grouped to look on at the spectacle, and this opened into the one prepared for us, which, as I said, was one of the family bedrooms. Overlooking the piazza was its beautiful mullioned window, with slender stone columns whose capitals time had partly worn away; but here all beauty as well as antiquity ended. The interior was modern and tasteless. The walnut furniture was new and pompous, the wall decoration hopelessly ugly, and the ornaments and frippery of the dressing-table still more so. The only pictures were two very bad and brilliant copies of sacred subjects.

It was six o'clock and the sun had just left the piazza. This is the hour of the Palio, that the heat of the August day may be avoided as far as possible. We had made our way with difficulty through the masses of people in the streets so as to take our places early and watch the assembling of the crowd. We had encountered very few English or American tourists, but thousands of people gather into the city from all the country round, and they were now pouring into the piazza from every opening. On the day preceding the race tiers of seats are built up against the lower stories of the buildings and draped with cloth. Just within, a course is prepared by bringing earth and sand to the piazza, tamping and watering it and erecting temporary wooden barriers as its inner boundary. Thus the whole becomes a great amphitheatre.

Sweeping round it are the unbroken ranks of the

dusky old palaces, their balconies and windows hung with bright draperies, rugs and embroideries and filled with the aristocratic inhabitants of Siena. Even the roofs are fringed with people gazing down. Of the crowd below, those who can pay for the raised seats take them, those who cannot must stay behind the barriers and strenuous are the efforts to get a place immediately against them. But until the last moment enclosure and course are alike full of moving people. Those who have seats for sale lay hands upon the passers-by and adjure them to buy places before it is too late. Candy men run hither and thither with sweetmeats and great is the sale of toy balloons with a terrible squeak. Now of all times is the occasion to see the leghorn hats peculiar to Siena; wide-spreading, often of exquisitely fine braid, their broad, pliant brims wave in the breeze and take all sorts of graceful curves. A gay taste prevails in the matter of trimming, quite irrespective of the age or condition of stoutness of the wearer. Many of the younger women had ambitiously trimmed theirs freshly for the *festa* with crisp ribbons and soaring plumes and flowers; but I liked better the antiquated ones, where a dear old *contadina* with ample waist and a face like a baked apple, would have the crown of her hat, owned for many a year, surrounded with a flat wreath of pink roses and two long white satin tails hanging far down her skirt. Under the brims of these one could detect the glitter of enormous gold ear-rings, hollow of course, but even then of no inconsiderable weight.

Denser and denser swarmed the crowd in the piazza below us and the united hum of their voices rose as from an enormous bee-hive. The ring as well as the centre was a moving mass of human beings, and that the track could ever be cleared for the horses looked impossible. Suddenly a shot from a diminutive mortar sounded and

a preliminary mild roar went up from the thousands of throats. A line of *carabinieri* in their handsome uniforms, mounted on fine big horses, appeared suddenly across the track, filling the space transversely. They started forward, walking their horses slowly and pushing the crowd before them, which with the utmost good nature gradually separated to mount to the seats or retire behind the barriers, through openings left for the purpose, which were afterwards closed upon them. Then the cavalry went around the ring again at a quick trot, and behold the space free for the parade! The noise lulled slightly for a few moments while eager expectation awaited the grand entry. Every woman of the thousands gathered appeared to have a fan, and every fan waved and palpitated like a living embodiment of its owner's agitation. The surface of the vast assemblage rippled and undulated with their fluttering motion.

Another shot from the mortar, another shout, and there appeared a band of musicians and the heralds blowing their long silver trumpets. Very slowly they advanced, followed by the cortège of each *contrada:* knights, pages, grooms leading the race-horses, the jockeys riding others, attendants and standard-bearers. The standard-bearers, two for each *contrada*, went through all sorts of graceful gyrations with their banners, keeping them in perpetual motion, flinging them high into the air and catching them as they came down, so that the whole ring became a joyous moving kaleidoscope of brilliant tints. Only here does one see such beautiful and various flags. The costumes are not mere carnival imitations, but are of genuine velvet, silk and satin, and the armor and helmets quite superb.

Then came the famous *carroccio*, the war chariot of Siena, lofty, drawn by four horses and bearing the black and white flag of the city, and the cross, held by men in

armor. Next followed the *carroccio* of Florence, for the Sienese never forget that, a matter of six hundred years ago, at the mighty battle of Monte Aperto, they triumphed over their powerful rival and humbled her in the dust, and to this day they suspect the Florentines of a hidden soreness on the subject. When the representatives of the *contrade* had paraded slowly around the ring they took their places on a special section of seats reserved for them, and there was a short wait before the horses which were to race came trotting into the ring and round to the starting point. No tiresome "backing and filling" follows; when the rope has fallen, no matter whose horse has gained a small advantage, there is no beginning again. We waited, breathless, with the rest of the spectators. We were Giraffes, but alas! we knew that our horse was a bony little mare which looked too stiff to win a race even by fraud; and we were right, for in the end she came in at the very tail of the line.

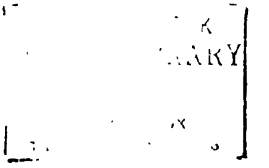
At length the rope fell, the horses shot forward and a thunderous uproar began. It flowed and ebbed, its loudest point being ever where the horses for the instant were passing. Women shrieked, men shouted, cursed or howled, as the horse of their *contrada* gained or lost. They clung to the barriers, they sprang into the air in an ecstasy of excitement. They tried to climb upon one another's shoulders and every throat grew hoarse with its deafening contributions to the din. It was soon seen that the Wolf was to have it. Once it looked as though the Snail were gaining; but alas! no; the Wolf's black and white checkerboard of a *fantino* came in two lengths ahead. One of the jockeys was thrown at the most dangerous descent; we were horrified to see him dashed to the ground. He lay still and was quickly lifted up by a number of men who darted forward and carried him off the ground. Soon after another rider fell, but

picked himself up and scrambled out of the instant danger of being struck by the horses which were just behind.

The moment the successful jockey leaps from his horse the crowd swarms into the ring and he is surrounded by a surging mob who cheer him, press upon him, hug and kiss him, almost weep over him and usually bear him off upon their shoulders. A number of policemen soon formed a protection round the Wolf or I really believe he would have been in danger of suffocation. The people poured down from the seats and the successful *contrada* half mad with joy followed its horse and jockey to church, where the banner they had just won was blessed. The night is spent in merry-making and though a good deal of wine is drunk I am told no quarreling or fighting occurs.

Two weeks later the successful *contrada* gives a banquet. Long tables are set down the main street of its quarter, and sometimes the horse is invited and stands at the head of the longest table, with a fine manger before him filled with the choicest equine delicacies.

Siena. Fonte Branda.



TOWER'D CITIES

"Ma non pensai che fosse così forte
La dolce nostalgia del suol toscano.
La nostalgia che non mi lascia mai
Che fosse così forte io non pensai."

— PANZACCHI.

TO drive across hilltops and through smiling valleys to San Gimignano on a Sunday in spring is a joyous adventure, especially if Siena be the point of departure. In that case the first miles of the journey are enlivened by the company of many of the maids and matrons of the neighborhood, and their dress and bearing on that day are so festal, almost opulent, as to cheer the heart of the traveler and make the roadside bright with color and vocal with mirthful voices. Their wide-spreading leghorn hats are decked with the longest white ribbons and crowned with gardens of artificial flowers, and one wonders whether the whole ambition of a *contadina* in this region does not centre in her head-gear. If so, one cannot help being gratified to see how fully and generally she manages to satisfy it.

But there is nothing to complain of in the whole drive between Siena and San Gimignano. The rich

Chianti country spreads its beauty and fertility abroad and waving grain and festooning vines, with the gray mist of the spare olives, clothe the undulating slopes. Wild flowers, too, spring up along the wayside and flaunt from every hedge. Nor is there lack of ruined castles for the romance-loving, not to speak of farmhouses with towers and gates that suggest battle and siege. But these last are the older ones; some of the newer are embellished in a manner to indicate a sprightly humor in the owner. For example, on the freshly-whitened wall of a cottage will appear a window with what accompaniment of gaudy drapery and brilliant flower-pots can be included, while from over the sill one or two florid personages in high-colored costumes smile vividly and continuously on the passers-by — and all this is the permanent product of the decorator's art.

Now and then we dipped to a winding stream, crossed by an arched bridge, and sometimes rattled through a little town where the bareheaded population appeared to live in the streets and to be devoting Sunday to reviewing the past week in concert. At last the far-famed towers of San Gimignano came in sight, and having climbed to the city gates we noisily made our entrance and drew up before the Leon Bianco. The White Lion proved rather dark, rather dingy and not entirely inviting, but it was the best accommodation which the City of Beautiful Towers afforded; and for my part, when I found I had been given a bedroom in the hollow of an arch that spanned a narrow street, I was consoled for much. From a window on either side of the arch I looked into bygone centuries; I could almost participate in the feuds of the neighboring great families, and should certainly have urged on an outbreak had one taken place just then. My bed was vast and billowy and beside it hung a cheerfully colored print of Saint Lucy carrying

her eyes on a platter, while on a little table near by stood an old Roman lamp.

We had been late in arriving and it was morning before we could go abroad and view the land. We found abundant interest in the harmonious antiquity, everywhere undisturbed by the effrontery of modern innovation. The appearance of the sombre Gothic buildings, strengthened by arches and buttresses high in the air, we fondly hope has not changed so very much since the thirteenth century when the town was a prosperous independent commune. Thirteen of the fifty towers which once crowded the pugnacious little city still lift themselves aloft. Square, rough, with hardly an aperture for light and without an attempt at architectural ornament, they are far from deserving the appellation "*belle.*" Indeed, they have an almost savage look, like the history of those fierce ruling families of San Gimignano who absolutely sacrificed the independence of the city to their private quarrels, in the end tearing her limb from limb till she fell under the subjection of Florence.

We paid our duty to the cathedral where with some good frescoes are many of a grotesqueness to bar any attempt at solemnity of feeling, notably the portrayal of the drunkenness of Noah, that silly, degrading story which is such a favorite with the early masters. The life of poor little Santa Fina, their local girl-saint, is here set forth in its various incidents, and the unpleasant details of what her determined piety led her to carry through are suggested by the explanations of the guide. Poor devoted mistaken child! living a life distressing to herself and intolerable to others, but dying at fifteen and performing miracles on the way to the grave—type of her time and still revered, what a curious survival the worship of her seems to-day! In the Palazzo Pubblico close by we thought of Dante, who once in that very spot fired

the people with his eloquent advocacy of the Guelph cause. He seemed by contrast to shine as the star of an enlightenment whose rays should have made clear the pitiful futility of such a life as poor Fina's.

At the highest point of San Gimignano there is a quiet garden much overgrown with tangled grasses and wild blossoming herbs. It occupies a nest in the remains of the old fortifications, and on the ample wall there is a look-out furnished with benches and a square stone table, below which the town and the country round about lie spread out as on a map. Here in the warm, still noon air, where the scent of wallflowers—Santa Fina's flower—was now and then wafted to us, we sat and gave ourselves to rest and pleasant ruminations. The sound of voices rose to us, attenuated by distance. Out of sight below, the present every-day life of the little town took on a certain unreality while its roofs and towers, ignoring the changes at their feet, communed together almost audibly. They talked of their youth when times and manners were not as now. Then, indeed, there was something to gaze down upon. The rough brood below pulsated with life; ebullition, turmoil sprang into being in a moment. Then they themselves became a part of the drama, for tower answered tower in the fury of hostile encounter when the souls of these human creatures were convulsed, and blood once splashed the rugged stones that now felt only the passionless trickle of rain-drops. Alas, that it was all over—the past dead, the present mere spiritless monotony! As once implacable hands had reared them, so now they mourned unabashed for the agitation and ferment of their prime. Thus after a while we left them and quitting our high gallery joined again the careless population of San Gimignano, unconscious and unresentful of the disparagement murmured above their heads.

San Gimignano. The Fountain without the Walls.

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In the afternoon, preparing for a longer walk, we stood at the top of the high flight of steps leading down from the Palazzo Pubblico. Our provisional attitude appeared to strike a dozen or so of speculative little boys and they scrambled up the stairs and clamorously urged their company upon us to any or every point of interest in the vicinity. We refused; they persisted. We ignored them; they were not to be discouraged.

Taking refuge in satire I remarked, "I suppose you are all official guides to San Gimignano?"

But upon this point there was some division of opinion. Some cheerfully shouted, "Yes, yes," while others cried, "No, Signora, no! *I* am, but *he* is not, nor *he*," anxiously pushing into the front rank and hustling aside as many rivals as possible.

"But we know San Gimignano; we have been everywhere and are not in need of a guide."

They grinned and shuffled a little but looked no less determined. It was evident that we were not to be unattended but we began also to feel relentings toward these pertinacious young rascals, especially one scampish little urchin in a green waistcoat who was enjoying the humorous side of our helplessness.

At this point we thought of a diversion and asked if they were fond of sweets. Upon this subject there was absolute unanimity and selecting the largest boy we put him in trust of funds on which to treat the whole group. Clattering at break-neck speed down the stairs they galloped across the piazza, and the absence of all consultation showed that there was no hesitation as to the place where the money was to be spent. But were they to be overreached in this way? No fear of that. The shop was but too near and before we could gather ourselves together and get out of sight they were upon us again like a swarm of flies. Some, with cheeks distended by

the sweetmeats just purchased, shamelessly vociferated that Luigi had unfairly kept most of the candy for himself and that they had been left out in the distribution. The broad farce of this climax left us shaking with laughter and we set off, not unwilling to bear for a time the society of these disarming little wags.

After time enough had elapsed to make it evident that no more plunder was to be looked for from us, our companions dropped away one after another with the exception of two, Green-Waistcoat of the wicked eye and a boy of about the same age with a really handsome ingenuous face. This pair made the whole round of the walls of San Gimignano with us, keeping at a distance of a few feet, now and then joining in the conversation if encouraged but never being importunate or troublesome. It may be added that thereafter during our stay we gravely recognized the pair as acquaintances in our meetings on the street, but strange to say we were not again disturbed by teasing attentions from them or the other youths of San Gimignano.

As we returned from our walk we paused in the Piazza della Cisterna to watch the women coming to draw water at the public well in the centre of the square. Each one bore a bucket to which was attached a heavy coil of rope. Broad stone steps converged at the massive curb and the encircling rim of stone showed a curious difference from any other we had seen. It was lined and seamed irregularly with deep grooves polished to a perfect smoothness. The coiled ropes were now explained, and one was left to surmise the depth of the well and the exertion that had been expended there year after year in laboriously pulling up, hand over hand, the household supply of water till the cords had thus furrowed the stone.

One morning early we passed out of the fine, frowning gate that lifts a threatening front to the enemies of San Gimignano, and descended the steep slope that leads to a certain fountain whose beauty offers a fit subject for poetry, even though its office is but the humble one of serving the local laundresses. Hollowed out of a wall of solid rock, it is supported in front by a series of beautiful pointed arches, and the great basins of clear water within lie in cool shadow beyond the reach of the sunlight. It was not too early for a number of girls to be already at work, but a length of several arches was still unoccupied, and here we presently became witnesses of a diverting episode. Down the hill from the town side by side came strolling a pair of companions evidently on the best of terms, the one a middle-aged man, the other a long-legged pig of generous bulk. No master with his dog ever appeared to be on a footing of more friendly intimacy, and together they approached the fountain. Within a few feet of it, however, the pig seemed to experience a feeling of reluctance and stopped short. The man addressed him persuasively and pointed forward. The pig turned his back and displayed obstinacy. His master then began an argumentative remonstrance in a tone as of one appealing to the better feelings of a fellow being, and at the same time pulled from his pocket a few nuts. One or the other touched the generosity of the pig, who, after a few expostulating grunts and hesitations, walked up to the brink of the basin. Having once made up his mind he behaved like a Trojan and stood firm as a rock while his master again and again splashed double handfuls of cold water over him, rubbing his back between whiles and administering encouragement and approbation in caressing tones. This ceremony over the two turned away and retraced their steps to the town in a way

which showed that the excellent understanding between them was undisturbed.

VOLTERRA.

On leaving San Gimignano the road makes many windings along the crests of hill ridges as it follows the southeasterly direction toward Volterra. The *Belle Torre* vanish and reappear again and again, each time a little smaller, till they fade away altogether and we trot merrily on to the rhythm set by the collar of bells our horses wear. This joyous sound is very inspiriting at first, but as it is extremely loud and interferes with conversation, we have had reluctantly to convey to Andrea our preference for relinquishing it. It would be too cruel to insist on starting without it, as in that case half the glory of our departure from a town would be lost, so we say nothing when the horses appear at the door in full panoply and we dash off swinging round corners and making all the noise possible till we are well beyond the walls. This accomplished, Andrea stops his steeds, clambers down, and meekly detaching the beloved necklace hides it under the carriage seat.

Across these grassy slopes the sweetest breezes blow, bringing us the fragrance of a thousand minute wild flowers. It is a solitary country and sometimes for miles there is not a town in sight. It gives one the feeling of freedom and a wide out-reaching space — a place to draw deep breaths in and let the thoughts fly far abroad. At last Volterra comes into view, high perched like its mates, its crenelated ramparts frowning down upon the Maremma, that sinister but innocent-looking land that deals subtle death while speciously luring by its fertile soil. Peasants tempted by good wages to labor there during the summer too often carry back with them to their homes the poison of its fatal malaria.

Volterra. The City Gate.

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Before reaching the walls of the city we came upon an abandoned villa looking down its weed-grown path between two ranks of towering cypresses, beautiful, solemn trees, whose black columnar trunks upheld a wall of dense shadowy foliage, through which no ray of sun might penetrate. Immovable before any wandering breeze they stood, looking almost as indestructible as the stones beside them. But lonely as they were they were not funereal, only pensive, thoughtful, lost in a long revery, the memory of their past; for with their growth they had watched the waxing life of the villa they guarded; and within their hearing how many secrets had been whispered! That was in their youth, for they had outlived the last tenant and the house stood silent, the soul gone out of it. Compared with these sedate old trees, however, the villa itself was nothing short of frivolous, and the statues upon their pedestals in the garden were almost grotesque in their smirking attempts at elegance. Antiquated they were, but not antique, for they represented ladies of a period when petticoats were voluminous and beflounced, and to see the levity of their airs and graces translated into marble was enough to make one blush. Not even their crumbling condition, eroded by time as they were, could dignify them in this their old age, and we felt sure the cypresses had secretly disapproved them from the beginning, and even now only tolerated them through long association and pity for their neglected dotage.

But after all what ancient garden undisciplined and overgrown is not dear and lovely? Briars take possession here and there, delicate wild growths veil the ground left vacant by the dying out of exotics, and native blossoms spring up everywhere to weave a many-colored pattern on the sod. We could wander about here at will, and we idled an hour away in this beguiling spot

before entering Volterra. When at length we crept under the heavy archway of its mighty walls the very weight of them seemed to settle upon our consciousness, and the age and immutability of the city was tangibly borne in upon our minds. Its antiquity reaches back so far that its origin disappears in a mist of conjecture, but we know that it was a famous Etruscan city and held out for two years against the Romans when they were brand-new filibusterers. At last it had to give in and become a Roman city, and then all through the Middle Ages it had a varied, adventurous history till Florence subdued it in the fourteenth century. Rebelling against her more than once it was at last crushed by Lorenzo dei Medici, under whom it was taken and subjected to a most cruel sack and slaughter. Dreadful were the sights and sounds of that day, and one takes a grim satisfaction in remembering that Lorenzo could not die easily for thinking of it.

But Volterra has re-peopled itself many times since then, and as we threaded the streets pretty rosy faces peeped at us out of tiny casements high in the air and a cheerful buzz proceeded from the little shops where local wares were exposed for sale. The principal industry of the city is the manufacture of alabaster ornaments, and one cannot but heave a sigh at the thought that two-thirds of the population are occupied in supplying to the world objects of such hopeless ugliness. Whole windows glare white with these little monstrosities, in Florence and Rome as well as here, and the fact that so many are called for is enough to make one despondent over the æsthetic sense of both Italians and foreigners.

Wishing well to all the inhabitants of the place, we desired to work a reform among the old women of Volterra who, no one knows why, have adopted a most unbecoming fashion — that of wearing men's hats, high-

crowned, gray felt ones — perched on the back of the head. When a kerchief is put on under this and knotted beneath the chin the effect may be imagined. Venus herself would become a fright in such a head-gear. There is, however, no fault to be found with the younger generation in the matter of attention to costume, and it is even a little disappointing to observe that it is almost sophisticated and knows the latest cut of sleeves. It is vain now to mourn over the loss of the beautiful native costumes of these provinces. They are gone past recall and Fashion has insinuated herself into Volterra, undeterred by its venerable aspect and the threatening of its prodigious walls that with their splendid ranks of sandstone blocks measure no less than thirteen feet in thickness and forty feet in height.

It was Sunday, and in twos and threes pretty girls linked arm in arm sauntered along, sociably chatting, and if they were cognizant of the groups of youths who stood here and there glancing at them as they passed, their unconsciousness was admirably acted. One can hardly help feeling a bit melancholy that custom keeps the young of opposite sexes so sternly apart here, but etiquette appears to be quite as tyrannical in this small town as for instance in a centre of gayety and fashion like Bologna. In that city it was especially brought to our notice one night at an open-air concert, and the youth and beauty who attended it will never know the wistful commiseration we wasted upon them. It was a warm, moonlit evening, and in the Piazza Galvani thousands of people were walking about or forming parties at tables where they could consume ices and listen to the playing of the band. In short, it was the very place and hour for young people to enjoy a little romance together, and yet custom stepped in to prevent their mingling. Families of big, blooming daughters or small, coquettish

ones were carefully chaperoned by plain, middle-aged mothers who went about like little tugs conveying showy vessels under full sail, for the girls wore white or light dresses with all the feathers, ribbons and laces they could muster. They met other girls and then stopped and fell into gayly chattering groups while the mothers dropped into the background and communicated quietly in lower tones, at the same time keeping a vigilant eye upon their progeny.

All this while the young men were also standing in knots or strolling about together apparently paying no attention to the girls, while the latter, on the other hand, wore an air of complete indifference to any observation or admiration they might be eliciting. There was no flirting; decorum reached such a point that had it not been for one little incident we should have felt it absolutely chilling. This was when a young man placed himself opposite us where he could eye a vivacious girl in pink. There he remained for all of a quarter of an hour with his gaze sternly and unsmilingly fixed upon this damsel, while she never turned her head to look at him, but at the same time was acutely conscious of his regard. She became more animated than ever; she smiled, she tossed her head; she raised her eyebrows and rolled her pretty eyes; she bestowed upon her female companion all the pleasurable excitement his behavior gave rise to. When he looked the other way for a moment she stole a glance in his direction, but when he turned back she was again absorbed in her friend. A gravity so unmoved as to be hardly less than stony appeared to be his rôle and the most buoyant exhilaration hers. Was this courting in Bologna? Was it followed by a demand in form upon the parents, a decorous wooing where they met once or twice in the presence of a duenna, and finally a marriage, after which they became acquainted? We

manage these things differently, and in a way the license of which would no doubt shock Volterra, but their stricter code does not seem provocative of discontent, and I make no doubt there are as many espousals here according to the population as there are in Boston. At any rate, we did not concern ourselves so strenuously with the question as to disturb the leisurely enjoyment of a Sunday in Volterra.

Both within and without the walls it is delightful strolling, whether one ends by perching upon the broad top of a parapet beyond the great gates to gaze down upon the varied country below or withdraws into the dimness of contracted streets where overhanging eaves nearly meet, to grope for some ardently desired picture. Volterra, far out of the beaten track though it be, possesses a few of the loveliest of Italian paintings. Signorelli's Annunciation is here in a chapel of the Duomo, one of the most beautiful of all that great master's works, and Benvenuto di Giovanni has more than one fine example; but rarest and so, perhaps, most rejoiced over, we found a little Madonna by Sassetta behind the altar of a small church furthest from our *albergo*. In the dusky retirement of this sanctuary we admired her with an ardor that somewhat surprised the perfunctory custodian, unused to seeing this picture, which he evidently regarded without enthusiasm, evoke such lively feeling. He appeared to be a sardonic person, unlike most of his calling, and I suspected him of not being a native of Volterra or even of Tuscany. It was easy to see that he considered the whole affair as overdone, perhaps including the fee he received at our departure, for as we turned away from his murmur of acknowledgment I half thought I overheard, uttered beneath his breath, the words "*Tre volte buona!*" Now, to be called good once by an Italian is, of course,

a gratifying thing, but strange to say, nothing more derogatory can be cast at one than to be called thrice good, for in that case the implication is that there is less of benevolence than of feeble-mindedness!

Volterra's nearest railway station is nine miles away, and as we emerged from our hotel at nine o'clock the next morning to take the diligence, we coveted the elevated outside seats from which to enjoy the prospect on the long descent to the plain below. We had not bespoken them, however, and some of those Italians waiting to start would of course have been more provident than we. But to our satisfaction we were alone in our desire for them. The Italians climbed into the body of the vehicle and promptly pulled down all the linen curtains and fastened them securely so as to shut out every particle of dust and view. We started off and began to roll over the hard, even road smoothly enough and at a moderate pace, according to our idea; but hardly had we gone ten rods before the curtains were suddenly snatched apart just behind my shoulder and a volley of Italian invective shot forth at the driver—picturesque imprecations, for oaths seem somehow to lose their profanity in a foreign language. What the devil was the matter that this vehicle was rocking like a boat in a storm? Was that the pace at which he intended to take us down the mountain! Son of an elderly, unbeautiful dog! And a great deal more, waxing hotter and hotter to the climax. The driver's return fire was quite as vigorous, and for some moments I felt as though suddenly caught in the space between two charging bands of warriors. After each had freed his mind, however, peace returned, the driver wound up his little coffee-mill of a brake and we proceeded at much the same rate of speed as before till we had descended to the Saline Springs, where the train passes which carries the traveler on to Pisa.

LUCCA.

"At Lucca, for the autumn festival,
The streets are tulip-gay; but you and I
Forgot them, seeing over church and wall
Guinigi's tower soar i' the black-blue sky,
A stem of delicate rose against the blue . . ."

MME. DARMESTETER. *Tuscan Olives.*

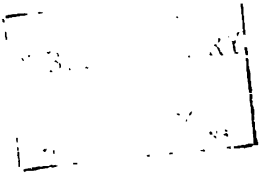
We left Pisa in the middle of the afternoon to drive to Lucca, and though the road affords no alternations of ascent and descent it yields such variety and charm that one would not change a rod of it. Certainly if it is traversed just at the right hour of a perfect afternoon in the month of June, in all the ripeness of an Italian summer not too far advanced, and freshened by recent showers, there can be nothing more delicious. At least so thought three happy beings as they set off.

An Italian friend once said to us, "Those who visit Italy only in the winter or early spring have never known her. The true Italy one sees in summer." This is true enough of the traveler who departs from the country after spending a winter in Rome or Florence, shivering in rooms insufficiently heated and occasionally venturing into tomb-like churches and icy galleries. He hurries away while the tree branches are still bare and the festooning grape-vines mere leafless ropes, and how can he carry with him any realization of the beauty and affluence of the summer landscape? Then there are those who insist that October is the crowning month of the whole year, with its flush of sumptuous color and its joyous vintage festivals. Perhaps in Italy it lacks the shade of sadness it has elsewhere, the impression of hectic decay that our wondrously-tinted forests suggest; or perhaps the tinge of melancholy is there and renders it all the fuller. At all events, one must long to complete the cycle and know an Italian autumn.

After leaving Pisa there are broad meadows to cross and then come low hills, at the foot of which country villas with their gardens spread; and at intervals a space of road is lined by two opposite ranks of houses belonging to a farming hamlet. The fronts of many of these cottages (if one may call such solid habitations of stone and mortar by that name) displayed a new architectural feature in the curtains and friezes of onions which adorn them. Any one who has become familiar with the respectful consideration accorded to this humble vegetable in studios and art schools, where its conformation and its rich gradations of color are made the subject of many a study, will not be inclined to mock at this scheme of decoration. At all events he will be far better able than the critic who has only culinary associations with it, to appreciate the fine tints taken on in the sun by these adornments, in which the leaves have been deftly braided till a sort of fabric is formed which, hanging in lines or festoons, is made to follow the taste of the owner. These houses had usually a bit of green about them also; a tree flung its branches across, or a grapevine swayed against one corner.

At one point there is a quietly-flowing river to cross, and here, somewhat removed upon the left of the way, a wonderful little town mounts a knoll. A few tall trees, perfectly disposed, spring from its beautiful outline and the composition of the whole is so flawless that it seems rather the dream of some landscape painter projected upon the sky of his imagination than the gradual growth of mundane needs. At last Lucca comes in sight, with her impressive ramparts still rearing their solid, unshaken protection about her. The top of these ramparts and their irregular projections forming garden spaces are all planted with tall, shade-giving trees, and upon them one may circle round the brave little city in

Lucca. The Guinigi Tower.



a quarter of an hour, such is its compactness. Within there is an endearing spell about it that is renewed each time one sees it, and it is a matter for wonder that it is not more frequented even by casual wayfarers, for it is worth the effort of a long pilgrimage.

For the student of Roman antiquities there is an amphitheatre and the knowledge that Julius Cæsar once sat in solemn council here with Crassus and Pompey. For the lover of a later age there is the association with Dante who, in his wanderings tarried here and for a moment, some aver, forgot Beatrice in the fascination of the Lucchese Gentucca. Besides this there is rare beauty in the little city itself, and everywhere present there is the attraction of interesting architecture.

GUINIGI ARMS.

In the cathedral is one of the most beautiful tombs in the world. Well do I remember the first time I stood before it, in a sort of rapture of discovery, wondering in the innocence of my ignorance why it was not more celebrated. Later, when I had read among other things, Mr. Ruskin's dicta and the fanciful pages of "Earthwork out of Tuscany," I realized that this lovely sleeping Ilaria had been fondly regarded by many.

Coming from distant Liguria to her Lucchese home, she had been but three years a wife when she died, and loving remembrance is embodied in the exquisite beauty and simplicity of the figure that represents her. It lies upon its bier, tall, noble, outlined by the perfect folds of its marble drapery. One's eyes never tire of resting upon it nor one's fancy of playing about the beautiful

woman whose effigy still preserves for us the sweet expression that in spite of closed lids lingers about the mouth, and of whom there must have been so much to relate which now we shall never know. Alas, that history is so coldly neglectful of such precious records!

But to return to our entrance into Lucca this particular evening. It was somewhat late to carry out a cherished plan which we had formed long before, so that we lingered not on the way, whatever the temptation, but hastened to the quiet street where the Albergo Croce di Malta stands. We were pleased with its inviting aspect and its quaint rooms. Our own ran along the front of the second story, but differed in level, so that we mounted two or three steps to one and descended as many to another. Besides this there were odd recesses and corners which suggested the remodeling and contriving of an old building, and a curious little boudoir adjoining might have been a chapel now reduced to worldlier uses. After a quick survey we hastened to the carrying out of our plan, which was neither more nor less than to take supper by sunset on the summit of the highest tower in Lucca.

The delectable nature of such a project had occurred to us upon a former visit and had remained with us in the form of a pleasant air-castle thereafter. The tempting peculiarity of this tower was that it bore upon its summit, like a fairy hanging-garden, a tiny grove, provoking curiosity as to how it could sustain life aloft there, exposed to winter storms and the heat that in late summer is said to be intense. Besides, had not Mr. Howells talked of this tower in that book dearest to the heart of Italian travelers, "Tuscan Cities"? Though even he had not enjoyed the bliss we proposed to experience. There was also another precious association. We liked to think that Ilaria had sometimes climbed it, for it was

the tower of the Guinigi, of which family her husband was once the head.

At first it was somewhat difficult to make our host assimilate the idea that even English-speaking *forestieri* could seriously intend to do anything so unheard of and unreasonable. The head waiter joined our conference — the fattest man in Italy, of a vast bulk that he seemed yet to bear without self-consciousness — but in the end we separated with a promise of cold roast fowls and accompanying viands to be prepared while we meanwhile flew to ascertain whether the powers in authority would yield to our desires. Away we drove to the foot of the Palazzo Guinigi, to the very trunk of the tower. The portal was open, the entrance hall empty and silent. We could find no one on that floor.

Across the narrow slit of a street upon which the palace fronted we saw a friendly-looking shoemaker glancing from his tiny shop, a sort of swallow's nest in the wall, and we stepped across to appeal to him. Upon the partition just over his head a notice was fastened which instantly caught the eye: "*Qui non si bestemmia.*" "No swearing allowed here." He was a cobbler of character. We felt protected and reassured at once and explained our difficulty. He displayed a sympathetic interest and nodded his head comprehendingly. The thing might be done. The key, however, was in the hands of the tenants who occupied the highest floor. We sent a long look upward. It was many a flight of stairs to where the tower sprang above the roof. But we began the ascent forthwith. The staircase was massive, well lighted and with broad landings, as befitted the life that once went on there. Up and up we toiled, stopping now and then as the views from successive stories gave us wider and wider prospects, till at last we stood directly under the roof and before the door belonging to the

highest apartment. In response to a knock the door opened and a small, bent old woman stood within. To her we submissively imparted our wishes, while she surveyed us as we thought benignantly nor seemed to regard our request with disdainful surprise. She agreed to ask her mistress and courteously invited us to enter while she did so.

If the expedition had been productive of nothing more than the impression the glimpse of this interior gave us, it would have been far from barren in result. We were ushered through an inner passageway into a *salon* with windows looking out from the opposite side of the building. It would be hard to express the peace and aloofness that breathed from this quiet room, with its outlook as from the elevation of a hill-top, all sound of life coming from afar in a subdued murmur, the tranquil valley far beyond the confines of the city wall spread out below. Within, silence, order, a spareness of furnishing and absence of trifling ornament unusual in a place of its class. The principal object in the room was a grand piano drawn in convenient proximity to the light from the open window. Almost an air of asceticism pervaded the place, and yet this instrument with its open keyboard softened all and set one dreaming of long, sweet, leisurely contemplative hours, of tones of Baldassare Galuppi drawn from these yellowed ivories, of strains of Monteverde and Pergolese that a listener might catch floating downward in the night air.

Strange to say, for one moment we had a glimpse of a second figure, small, bent and old like the first, which paused an instant in gliding by the doorway to another room. Was it the mistress? If so, did she live here alone? And who, then, touched the keys of this piano, which somehow had the look of use? After a little the old servant returned and brought with her per-

mission to occupy the tower as long as we liked, upon which we hastened away to finish our preparations.

We returned to the hotel for our supper and found the employees of the inn in a group at the door with the hampers, including all necessary dishes, admirably packed, and a servant ready to mount the seat with the coachman and go with us to carry them up. An air of animation and amusement now pervaded the company, for they had evidently arrived at the conclusion that our proceedings were to be regarded humorously. Next in order it was necessary to find a shop where *bucellato*, the specialty of Lucca, was kept, for we wished our feast to have every local element possible. I will admit that we experienced some disappointment in regard to *bucellato*, which is a sweet-cake of unyielding hardness and highly charged with anise. Arrived again at the roof of the Guinigi Palace, the old servant came smilingly forth with a key in her hand and conducting us to a big door, which she unlocked, showed us the beginning of the flights of stairs still to be mounted before reaching our goal. We toiled up and at last through a trap-door came out upon the leafy summit of our tower.

And what shall I say of this realization of our anticipations? It was all and more than we had dreamed it. There we stood as though suspended in the air, far above the roofs of the town, while on every side spread the lovely valley from which rose wooded hills dotted with villas. Beyond all, mountain walls closed in the prospect and away in the direction from which we had come rose Monte San Giuliano, "*perchè i Pisan Lucca veder non ponno.*" The hour was perfect; not a breeze rustled the leaves over our heads and the sun, dipping to the horizon, bathed all in the glorifying light that just precedes sunset. Neither was there any disillusionment about our Babylonish garden. The stout little trees

were rooted in an abundant amount of soil which had been conveyed to the roof and there disposed in deep beds, between and around which next the parapet was ample room to walk and sit. Two of the trees were ilex, and on measuring we found the trunk of one to be thirty-five inches in circumference. Here, then, we spent an hour or two of such happiness as brings wonder, thankfulness, joy and I know not how many other emotions in a tumult to the heart and fills one with rapture at the heavenly beauty of the earth, while it leaves behind what haunts the memory forever.

VENICE

"This most noble city is worthily called in Latin, Venetia, as it were *veni etiam*, that is, 'come again.'"

FYNES MORISON.

AS THE typical life of Venice is lived upon the water, a large part of one's comfort and enjoyment there depends upon one's gondolier. The tourist who spends but a few days in Venice usually puts up with a gondola called at haphazard from the *traghetto*, or ferry, nearest his hotel, or picked up when the spirit moves him to embark, wherever he may be. Not so the lover of Venice who goes there to stay weeks or months. The choice of a gondolier then becomes important. Such rare good fortune presided at our selection that it has been a matter for gratitude ever since.

It happened on this wise. Toward the middle of our first stay in Venice we became conscious of the advantage of hiring a gondolier by the week, and as some friends were leaving who had an excellent one we thought it a good opportunity to engage him. This project was frustrated through our own ignorance, for having unwittingly infringed the immutable laws of

gondolier etiquette all hope of securing Lorenzo was at an end. Coming out upon the steps leading down to the water in front of our hotel on the last evening of Lorenzo's engagement with our friends, I asked him if he would not like to take service with us. A conversation ensued, at the end of which Lorenzo, with a backward fling of his hand toward the group of gondoliers listening near by, exclaimed aloud with impatient hopelessness,—

"I cannot, Signora, because of these!"

The meaning of this was, that our hotel having a *traghetto* close to its door, the gondoliers belonging to it considered it their right to serve the guests. It would not do for a gondolier belonging to another *traghetto*, like Lorenzo, to appear to have wormed himself into the good graces of any one whose patronage he had no right to solicit, as might have appeared in this case. If, however, the gondolier has made no advances, but is chosen uninfluenced, he may without reproach accept such an appointment. On receiving an engagement by the week, he goes into "costume,"—that is, he dresses with especial elegance himself and gets out his best cushions and new carpet, which in general are not used when he is merely on the *traghetto*. Then for eight *lire* a day he becomes your servant, and besides having the gondola ready for you at all hours of the day or evening, does any errands you may send him on or otherwise occupies himself as you direct.

So a little scene is sometimes arranged by the knowing, to establish a right to a certain gondolier. Two friends of ours who wished to engage a gondolier they had taken a fancy to from another *traghetto*, laid plans with him beforehand, and accordingly walked away from the hotel one morning, apparently for sight-seeing on foot. At a prearranged point they met their gondolier, whose

Venice. Giovanni.

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boat and clothes were carefully prepared to look their worst, and he rowed them back to their hotel. Having arrived they turned and, taking care to be overheard, praised his rowing and announced that they wished on the spot to engage him permanently. He enacted surprise, gratification and consent, and retired to return "in costume" and belong to them thereafter.

In some such way we should have approached our own affair; but as I said, lack of knowledge having put an end to it, we felt aggrieved and the next morning refused to take a gondola from the interfering *traghetto* and walked away to another. Coming out upon this, we perceived among the men waiting for custom the very flower of gondoliers, as far as appearances went, young, handsome as a picture, and beautifully dressed. I made it known that I wished him to row us that morning. He rose respectfully, but stood still while the head of the *traghetto* stepped forward and said,—

"It is not his turn, Signora; here is the next gondola in order. They are all alike."

The last was not true, for there is a great difference even in gondolas on the same *traghetto*. Baffled again I shook my head and turned to depart; but at that moment the first gondolier sprang forward and without any further hindrance put himself at our disposal. The explanation of this, I learned later, was that it is the duty of the head of the *traghetto* to endeavor to have the man next in line employed but if the patron holds out and will take no other the preferred one is allowed to go.

The gondola of our boatman was as beautiful and well-appointed as himself and after a few days' trial, being forewarned, we secured in proper form the best gondolier in Venice, as we hold. Giovanni was now ours and it became the order of the day that he should appear at the steps of the hotel soon after our breakfast

hour, to be ready to take us out for the morning. At noon we returned to the hotel for *colazione* and a rest afterwards; at three or four we again went out with Giovanni, to return for dinner; and at eight or nine embarked once more to float about till eleven. This routine, of course varied sometimes, is repeated on this our second visit, only at our arrival we had some trouble in finding Giovanni. He had changed his *traghetto* and our letter was long in reaching him. Upon the first morning we of course walked to St. Mark's, and later, coming out upon the *piazzetta*, took the first gondolier who offered. He was an old man, well and neatly dressed and with a fine face and gentle serious expression. After a little he told us that he had formerly been gondolier many seasons to Professor Rooskéen. Although expected to be immediately aware of the Professor's fame, we did not at once realize that he meant Mr. Ruskin. When we did, of course we were properly impressed and although he did not voluntarily gossip about his beloved master, he said enough to show his attachment and reverence for him and let us know that he was still in communication with the family.

"Perhaps Mr. Ruskin made you a present of your gondola?" said I.

"*Altro!*" he replied, and the emphasis of consent contained in this word is such that it would be impossible to express it in any one English vocable. About himself and his affairs the old man talked freely. He is seventy-two years old but goes out to work every day and rows well but slowly, not with the powerful and sustained stroke of Giovanni. He cannot work many hours, he says, and not in the evening for he must go to bed early. He has many cares, a widowed daughter with children to support besides one or two other stray members of the family.

He spoke with such simplicity and charm that we talked long with him. It was his birthday, as it happened, and we asked if there would not be a feast in honor of it that evening — meat perhaps, as not being eaten every day. He shook his head and smiled. No, there would not be meat; but then he did not care much for that — he preferred fish, even if there were a choice. When we parted each of us gave him a little present, one for wine, one for fish, and so on, telling him he must have the best dinner possible that night. He was much amused and gratified at this, and later took the trouble to find Giovanni out for us and send him to our hotel.

Giovanni dresses in fine white duck suits with blue sailor collar and wears a wide-brimmed white straw hat with a blue ribbon. His well-fitting russet leather shoes are as neat as possible, and he tells us his wife has to furnish him a fresh suit of clothes once in three days. Everything about the gondola is handsome and well tended, the *ferro* or tall steel beak, shining, the brasses polished, the carpets and cushions clean and fresh. Instead of one rather uncomfortable chair to add to the gondola in case of needing an extra seat, Giovanni has two handsome and comfortable ones with high carved backs, and after some search to procure it we have a flag of our own, red, with the lion of St. Mark upon it in brown and gold. Giovanni is the prince of gondoliers. As Charles the Second said of his minister Godolphin, "he is never in the way and never out of it." He rows silently when we are busy talking with one another, but is always ready to answer every question, to talk or to tell us tales of Venice when we are ready to listen and be amused. Then he is so sensible and resourceful. If we are likely to be cheated at an antiquity shop, Giovanni steps out of the gondola and murmurs in my ear that prices are high in that place and we had better purchase elsewhere.

He is untiring and always insists that he is not fatigued and can keep on working indefinitely.

He knows what will please us, and when we sink back upon the gondola cushions of an evening we find that "*Dovunque volete*" (Wherever you please) is a charming place to go to, for then we float to beautiful lonely spaces on the wide lagoons where there is utter peace and silence and the magic lights of the city grow small in the distance, and there we are rocked and lulled into oblivion of all earthly care and trouble, like the lotus-eaters. But there is no monotony with Giovanni. One night he carried us with firm, smooth strokes along the curving shore-line, far out toward the Lido, and then turning he brought us in on the flow of the high tide with a magnificent rush, the gondola panting and straining under his hand, poising itself with a little tremor at each powerful stroke and then sweeping forward like a great bird. We meanwhile vibrating with delicious excitement felt the boat under us as a live palpitating thing.

We love to stay out upon the wide waters at night, and whether it is moonlight or starlight, clear or cloudy, it is always just as beautiful and just as perfect in temperature, for here it is not necessary to suffer an oppressive day in order to have a soft warm evening. In the daytime, if we have no plan for study or sight-seeing, Giovanni takes us to the most curious and interesting spots and shows us the strangest old courts and buildings, the quaintest back canals, and everything that is pictorially ruinous and sketchable. Giovanni, beautiful and debonair as he is, has his cares. He has a wife and baby of two years, a father of eighty, and I believe, another relative or two toward whose support he contributes. He has to lay up in summer for the winter, when there is little for the boatmen to do. With all his

easy communicativeness, he has always maintained a self-respecting reticence in regard to his family affairs and though we had for some time wished he would take us to his home we had never quite ventured to ask it. When at length we cautiously brought up the subject, we found him politely acquiescent and so it led to our putting on our best gloves one afternoon, taking cards with us and proposing to Giovanni to conduct us to his house.

He rowed us some distance to the little canal of the Materdomini, a narrow slip of water, darkling between its upsoaring stone barriers. These however were not unbroken at the top; buildings of unequal height left gaps for the sunshine to stream through and in one place a curtain of vine swept over the high wall of a hidden garden. Giovanni gave a long sibilant whistle, the gondola stopped at a narrow stair and in a moment his smiling wife appeared, ready to receive us. Upon the ground floor just above the water-line was a big brick-paved room where all the trappings of the gondola were kept, needing a large space — the funereal *felse*, the summer canopy, etc., and where the gondola itself could be housed when desirable. From there we mounted to the dwelling, up three flights of stairs, not dark and contracted but clean and well lighted, getting glimpses on the way of the families who occupied the intervening stories. Giovanni himself could not, of course, leave the gondola, but his wife gave us no grudging welcome and was full of eager hospitality. She was *bella donna*, as the Italians say, plump and fair, with a mass of curly light-brown hair and fine dark eyes. At the top the third member of the family stood shyly peering down, a baby of two years, a pretty little thing, but delicate and slender in spite of his robust parentage and very bashful in his demeanor toward strangers.

The *quartiere* consisted of a hallway of quite generous width and four small rooms opening from it, two to the front and two to the back of the house. Being just below the roof, there was light and good ventilation together with a pleasant outlook. It was a homelike little place, but what struck us most was the perfect neatness of everything. The walls tinted in light colors looked as though freshly done the day before, the smooth wood-floors were white as scrubbing could make them, the furniture was excellent and solid. In the tiny parlor there were two chests of drawers besides a sofa and chairs. Its one window was full of potted plants and draped with white muslin curtains and upon the walls were framed photographs and colored prints. The bedroom was even more imposing with its furniture of heavy black walnut. It is absolutely necessary, by the way, that a gondolier's bride should bring with her to her husband a walnut bed. No matter what may be the elegance or cheapness of other woods, of iron or of brass, nothing but walnut can be for a moment considered and the handsomest that can be afforded. Antonina's left nothing to be desired and the chamber was fully furnished to match it. The white covers of the bedstead were edged with home-made lace and embroidered with large initials in red. Nina told us that this was all the work of her own hands.

The kitchen was the prettiest room of all, larger than the others, and with its walls hung with copper utensils of every kind. All the shapes were graceful and beautiful, even the water-buckets were pictorial. These things are the pride of an Italian housekeeper's heart, and are kept as bright as assiduous polishing can make them. A shelf at one side held a row of tall brass candlesticks and an old-fashioned tailor's goose with a dragon's head. Besides these three rooms, the principal

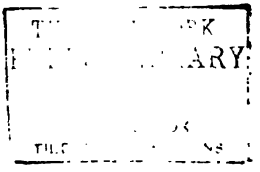
ones of the establishment, there was another which provoked some surprise. Just as neat and exquisitely kept as the others, it held a small carpenter's bench in one corner which Antonina said Giovanni used when he had time for it, for he could turn his hand to anything. Near by were long panels of beautifully carved wood and certain choice mountings of shining brass, portions, gathered little by little, of the new gondola which Giovanni is going to have when he has saved up enough to complete the purchase, for although the present one is still handsome, Giovanni's ambition soars beyond it and he will soon be the proud possessor of one of the finest gondolas in Venice.

Upon the walls of this room were fastened a number of sketches in oil, all by one hand, and showing so much knowledge that we wondered at them till later, when their presence there was explained. For this apartment and the use of the big room below they pay a little less than four dollars a month and with regard to the management of their other expenses they must be frugal and thrifty or they could never afford the large outlay for the new gondola. Giovanni was employed very young in the household of a noble Polish family who lived in Venice until lately, and he grew up, so to speak, with the only son who seems to have been a boy of great promise. The young Count studied painting and the sketches just mentioned were his, afterward given to Giovanni. Giovanni often posed for his young master and was even allowed to try his own hand at the brush sometimes. This explained what we had noticed more than once — that is, the easy and flexible way in which Giovanni falls into a good pose when requested to serve as model for the camera. As Giovanni grew older he became gondolier to the family and never left them until the death of the young Count a few

years ago. This blow caused the family to break up their home in Venice and they removed to Paris, whither they would gladly have carried Giovanni. He, however, could not make up his mind to go on account of a firm conviction of his that Paris is a city of the most abandoned wickedness. Had they gone almost anywhere else he would have followed them, he says. As it was, Giovanni remained behind but not alone, for he married Antonina, who was cook in the same family, and they then set up their own little establishment.

A gondolier's life is anything but an easy one for the hours are long and Sundays are included, while the gain is fluctuating. It is the ambition of the gondolier to have engagements with private families for then he is excused from duty on the *traghetto* and the hours are shorter, besides which he earns a fixed sum each day. Giovanni says his baby boy may be anything he pleases when he grows up excepting a gondolier. This however is not on account of the hard work but because Giovanni thinks the reputation of the profession is no longer what it was. That for one thing they are reputed extortionate in their charges is not, Giovanni says, always their fault but the fault of that august being, the hotel *portiere*. This personage Giovanni represents as quite satanic in his cunning and the possessor of so many perquisites that he often makes more money than the hotel proprietor himself. One of his methods of procedure is as follows: new-comers in Venice, if they are ignorant of the language and luxuriously inclined, call upon the *portiere* on all occasions and of course depend upon him to order gondolas and make bargains for excursions. The *portiere* secures the gondola therefore and announces the price, which will often be in excess of the real charge to the amount of a half or even more. At the end of the

Venice. Palazzo Dario.



time he pays the gondolier the usual sum and pockets his handsome commission.

On one occasion, when Giovanni happened to be the gondolier called, the price was set at an extravagant figure, as usual, and on the return of the party the officious *portiere* was at the steps to murmur to the head of the family that the charge would be put on the bill. The gentleman, however, who had developed during the afternoon an unpleasant independence of mind, brushed the *portiere* aside saying,—

"No, no; you need not trouble to charge it. I will pay the man myself."

With this he actually handed over to Giovanni the double sum originally arranged for, under the very eyes of the chagrined *portiere*, whose sensations may be imagined, obliged as he was to look helplessly on while the whole of his magnificent profit was recklessly transferred to Giovanni.

But to return to our visit. When Antonina had shown us all over her establishment, she left us in the parlor to which she returned in a moment to offer us some excellent *marsala* and little sweet-cakes. It seemed to be a point of etiquette for her then to glide quietly out of the room so that we might consume these refreshments relieved of the embarrassment of her presence. Upon her return we tarried to chat a little longer and to tell her of our satisfaction in her husband's good service. She listened to our encomiums pleased but not unduly elated and it was easy to see that she was proudly conscious of their being entirely deserved.

"Giovanni is always liked," she smilingly remarked as we rose to leave; "he has such good manners." To which we heartily acceded.

On our way home we threaded certain remote sluggish canals where sad old palaces look down upon

the voyager. Their carved stonework is disintegrating and the tooth of time has gnawed the design half away. Their splendid iron grills are rusting apart and the lower windows are draped thick with cobwebs, while along their water-line crabs scuttle aside at the approach of the gondola. These are the palaces that bring to one's mind with a pang the creeping malady that is said to have struck them all. The waters, once moved only by the imperceptible tides or the slow passage of the gondolas, are now perpetually forced against their foundations by the pert steamers that ply ceaselessly up and down the Grand Canal, and so a process of gradual undermining goes on. And not only do the palaces suffer, but the gondolas themselves are injured. With every passing of a steamer these same waves lift all the gondolas lying side by side at the *traghetti* and grind them against one another over and over, to their considerable detriment in the end. No wonder therefore that the gondoliers have more than one cause of grievance against these hated intruders. A little saddened by these thoughts and the dejection and decay about us, we gradually fell into silence. Venice grew old in our thoughts, and youth and beauty seemed taking a mournful farewell of it.

At this moment a diversion occurred that lightened our spirits and reminded us that flowers cling most fondly to crumbling walls, and youth and sweetness ever spring freshly up to cover the ravages of time. In the air just above our heads appeared two small dangling objects which with many jerks and vibrations were slowly descending toward the water. On examination they proved to be toy buckets to which were attached lengths of twine, and glancing upward we discovered that they proceeded from a tiny balcony upon the third story of the old *palazzo* opposite. This *balconcino* was just large enough to hold the two babies crouching upon

it, only the tops of whose curly heads we could discern as they bent low over their play. They were the proprietors of the battered little tin pails, and they were painstakingly lowering them but without following them with their eyes. Fortunately we were as usual provided with some bullet-like sugar-plums, approved by the infants of Venice, among whom we liked to distribute them, and capturing the playthings just before they had time to dip into the canal we filled them with something far more acceptable than salt water.

All this time the babies had not looked down, but feeling, as they supposed, the usual arresting of their buckets as they met the water, they began laboriously to draw them up again. We watched quietly and as they reached the balcony we saw the little hands stretched through the iron railing to steady them and draw them in. At first there was silence, next agitated exclamations could be heard, and then two little faces peered down with almost an expression of awe and eyes as large as saucers. As they perceived the earthly origin of their astounding good fortune, the two little countenances broke into dimples and then into happy laughter. For a moment they hung over the railing, trembling between delight and wonder, and then scrambled through the window behind them, no longer able to wait before imparting their marvellous adventure to the mother within.

To desert the water just at the loveliest time of day, to turn one's back upon the sunset and repair to a hot dining-room glittering with electric lights, there to labor through the courses of a long *table d'hôte* dinner is a hardship not willingly submitted to by true lovers of Venice. Especially is this the case in the late summer evenings which are here of such matchless beauty. To avoid this as often as possible has been our study, and an

account of our measures, taking one day as an example, will show how easily and delightfully it may be contrived.

Having floated about most of the afternoon, toward six o'clock we touched at the hotel steps, where a hamper already packed was handed out to Giovanni, who stowed it safely in the gondola. Then we cruised along the Riva and passing in at the Rio del Palazzo, stopped at the bridge of the Canonica. Here you land on the left-hand side and slipping into a narrow street, purchase of worthy Nicolò Monego a loaf of *panetone*, a specialty of Venice and one of the most toothsome morsels to be found in the world. It is sweet, it is light, it is plummy, and its refined exterior, circular and somewhat pyramidal, is of an even golden-brown, most inviting to the eye. *Panetone* under a slightly changed name is made in several places in Italy but the *acme* of perfection is reached only by Nicolò Monego — may his shadow never grow less!

After this we chose some fruit at a shop, for even in Italy it is not invariably good and the selection requires personal supervision. We left the place with a small watermelon in a sling, trailing along in the water after us. Thereafter two gondolas might have been seen gliding out upon the lagoon in the direction of Saint George of the Seaweed, that mysterious little island presided over by one of our favorite Madonnas. There is no such thing as landing there, to be sure, for high walls enclose it, rising sheer from the water's edge excepting at one point where a small inlet might receive a boat. This however is forbidden, so one can only look longingly at the tree-tops swaying above the barriers which betray a concealed garden. Upon one corner of the ancient wall stands the sweet mistress of the place, whose gentle presence it is that draws us often to this spot, a little Madonna holding the laughing *bambino* upon one arm,

while from the other hand swings the tablet Giovanni calls a *pazienza*. Above her head a bronze canopy stretches a slight shelter from sun and rain and so from her height she smiles down upon devout worshipers like us.

Rowing slowly toward her, for the evening was warm, we met a heavy black barge, which for lack of wind was being poled laboriously along the lagoon toward Venice. It looked like exhausting work for only two men, and the long oars bent with each push. One of the men presently hailed our skipper in the extreme of the Venetian dialect and Giovanni interpreted to us.

"They want to know if we can give them some water, *Madama*. They have none left and it will be some time before they can get to the city in this calm."

We instantly decided to give them half our supply even if we fell short. They looked spent and the face of one was almost mahogany-color with exertion and heat. So we rowed quickly to the side of their big craft and handed it up. They gulped it down, seeming hardly to stop to swallow, and we added a donation of bread and fruit which they received with a thankfulness almost touching. They rested but a few moments and then resumed their hard work while we pursued our way eastward.

Having arrived opposite the shrine of our gracious Madonna, we soon found a convenient group of piles beside which to steady our two gondolas, holding this evening four friends and a pair of faithful gondoliers. The cushioned throne of one gondola and the comfortable stuffed chairs yielded the four seats necessary, for the quartette was to sup together in it, and a table was arranged extending across and broad enough to support the feast then spread forth and served to us by our assiduous servants in livery. At this banquet there is usually

cold fowl, accompanied by tongue or ham, then follows a salad, next the *panetone* with cheese and lastly fruit and wine. The eatables are neatly packed at the hotel, together with plenty of plates and glasses, and when dessert has been put on the remains of the earlier courses are handed back to Luigi and Giovanni, who then take supper side by side at the stern, murmuring together in quiet and friendly conversation. At one point in the feast just described a little skiff neared us and the two occupants invited us in passing to partake of some "fruit of the sea." As we are ever hospitable to the idea of such experiments, we consented and they paused beside us and opened cockles, serving them to us on the half-shell till we were satisfied. We felt more interest in the pretty variegated shells than in their contents, which proved to be curiously unpalatable. They were not wasted however, finding great acceptance with Giovanni and Luigi.

If I have dwelt at some length upon the material side of this occasion, it is not because it was in itself the most important. As I have said, we could have dined more variously and far more extendedly by remaining at home, but then should we have seen Venice in its most enthralling hour? With the gondola's beak pointed toward the west we watched the oncoming sunset. The atmosphere was sifted gold; the water took on the same hue, and in its soft and glassy undulations seemed ever moving silently on, drawn toward the core of light and color whose blending gradations were melting from amber to gold and then to orange. Off against the horizon in the vaporous distance loomed a chain of dream-mountains, their luminous bases and soft withdrawing shadows almost dissolving as one gazed at them — the mighty Alps. And then as the gathering twilight deepened we glided slowly back toward the long tremulous lines of

light which from the Riva stretched themselves far to meet us across the wide floor of the waters.

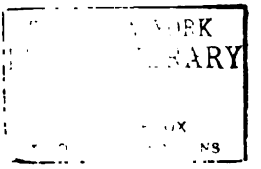
There is much music on the canals every night in Venice and if one is to be candid one must reluctantly confess that of late years it is not often good. Boats filled with singers begin to appear about eight in the evening and stop before the hotels which are massed together close to the entrance of the Grand Canal; or they pause a little way out in the stream where passing gondolas may gather round them. If these singers would only confine themselves to warbling in chorus their own charming melodies, of which there are so many, it would be delightful. This however is not their idea of what the tourist desires, and so one must oftener listen to grand arias sung by thin unsteady sopranos or harsh worn baritones; or, worse still, must give ear to modern romantic songs ending with an explosive shriek upon the last high note, that alas! always wins applause and encourages the perpetrator to go on. Most of the singers are working people, employed all day in various industries and devoting their evenings in the summer to making in this way an addition to their income. Giovanni tells us that they receive, when the money is divided up, from a dollar to a dollar and a half an evening. As the poor creatures keep it up till midnight, one wonders how they endure the continuous loss of rest.

This is the music of every night, but at intervals there is a water-concert on the Grand Canal, a thing to take part in if possible and to long remember, and if it be full moon then the last touch is added to something beautiful and unique. Lately there was such an opportunity and Giovanni came for us early in the evening, as the music barge was already in waiting at the other extremity of the city. We fled down the Grand Canal, urged by long sweeps of the oar, as Giovanni had

ordained that we should have a choice position for the occasion. At last we came in sight of the concert barge, which was a bower of green foliage twinkling with lanterns of the Italian green, red and white, all these brilliant globes being reflected upon the water in long waving ribbons of color. Just as we reached it we took a magnificent curve and sweeping round came up nearly abreast of it and about twenty feet away, the right position for hearing in the open air. In a few minutes the barge showed signs of moving and immediately scores of gondolas began silently to close in upon it till a solid mass had formed. It was the most democratic assemblage imaginable. Elegant gondolas with parties of handsomely-dressed people lay close to others containing the roughest, and I regret to say, dirtiest young boatmen, but nobody gave way, for it was first come first served. Of course every gondolier's aim was to keep the position once gained but it was only to be done at the same price as that of liberty! The officials on the concert boat did not wish that important vessel to be crowded in its passage up the canal, and on the other hand if the gondoliers allowed six inches of water to appear between their crafts a stealthy prow or stern was on the alert to wedge itself in instantly and steal a place. The officials yelled orders to make room and waved their arms wildly in the air. The gondoliers pretended to give way and really held their ground for dear life. At the prow of the big barge was a pump and hose, and at intervals this was plied forcibly to clear the space just in front, but wily Giovanni never allowed his gondola to get far enough forward to run any risk, and from the beginning to the end of the two hours had hardly changed his position in relation to the concert boat by two feet.

The mass of boats was now moving noiselessly through the canal as though impelled by a single oar and

Venice. The Madonna of San Giorgio.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when the voices from the barge joined in some sweet chorus a silence fell on all the audience. The moon had risen above the tops of the buildings and silvered the palaces whose balconies were full of onlookers. The gondolas carried only a point of light on the prow, a tiny obscure lantern. The people sat low in them, leaning back upon the cushions, and as one glanced across the ranks of dusky shapes that filled the canal from side to side, the gondoliers standing erect at the sterns in their white costumes, looked like statues rising at intervals from an undulating black floor. Occasionally there were solos and then the procession stopped, that not even the rippling of the water should interrupt. It was Venice, it was full moon; only one thing more could be desired to complete perfection, and that a lover. But if, alas! one cannot have a lover oneself one can sometimes watch a pair near by, as we did two happy beings occupying the gondola beside us. Oblivious of all the world besides, they made a solitude of their surroundings and melted into kisses and caresses whenever the mood overpowered them. In the intervals they held one another's hands.

During the longest stop the gondoliers had lashed their boats together. Ours being lashed on both sides appeared quite secure, but a gondolier just in front who desired our safer position undertook to quietly slip his steel-capped stern between us and the next gondola. Not so, however. Giovanni instantly recognized his aim. He fairly launched himself through the thirty feet of distance to the prow and giving the intrusive gondola a shove which sent it out into the open again, lashed ours still more securely, to the great amusement of our neighbors. And so we swept triumphantly up the canal till the dome of the Salute stood before us and the lagoon opened beyond, showing the long perspective of

the Riva, with its thousands of golden lights stretching out like a string of jewels till they grew small and twinkled themselves away in the obscurity of Sant 'Elena.

One of the institutions of Venice is the hooker, or crab as he is sometimes disrespectfully called, who lies in wait at every point where a gondola would be in the least likely to touch. With his hooked stick he draws the prow to shore and holding it there offers a greasy hat for the fee of the disembarking traveler. The thoughtless and unwary begin by responding at once but experience teaches that as this is a perpetually recurring demand, the time for the gratuity is later, when on reëmbarking you may drop your *soldo*, for no matter what may have been your liberality as you stepped out, the hat is presented just as confidently when you return five minutes later. At first one is apt to have a season of impatience with these old importuners whose services in general are so preposterously unnecessary, a good gondolier, excepting on a windy day, needing no assistance to bring his bark to shore. But on inquiry one finds that they are for the most part superannuated gondoliers, licensed to follow this calling, by which the city so thriftily provides a way for her disabled citizens to extort a living from the convenient tourist.

Their leisure moments, which are many more than their occupied ones, they sometimes spend in decorating the long handle of their boat-hooks with coins and medals more or less antique. These are usually of copper or brass and of little value, though curious and interesting ones often appear and occasionally those that are rare and valuable. This is a work of time and according to the taste of the worker the adornment is sparely or profusely applied and interspersed with borderings of small brass-headed nails. When finished it may be used by the owner until sold, but the intention is that it shall

attract the eye of a tourist who will wish to carry it away as a souvenir. The gondoliers are of course friendly to the hookers and as we near a landing Giovanni gives the summoning call, "*Venga, giovane!*" (Come hither, youth!), which never fails to amuse us afresh, for no matter what state of age or decrepitude a crab may have reached he is always hailed in these flattering terms. Occasionally a strong and able-bodied youth may be observed following this occupation, but in that case it is usually a gondolier suspended from his calling for a time as a punishment and meanwhile making a humbler living in this way.

One afternoon our party of four, in two gondolas, touched at the steps of San Giorgio Maggiore to look at the famous Tintorettos and Carpaccio's beautiful little St. George and the Dragon. The attendant crab was more than usually advanced in age, gnarled, knotted and blear-eyed to a surprising degree but though crooked and stiff of joint he was wonderfully active. He kept an anxious eye upon the gondolas as we emerged from the church when our visit was concluded. How was he to assist in pushing them both off if they were ready to depart simultaneously? The spirit of mischief tempted us to tease him; we glanced at Giovanni who was instantaneous in the comprehension and furtherance of a joke, and while our old crab was in the act of shoving off the other gondola we slipped away. But was our victim baffled? Not he! Distractedly hobbling to the point nearest our prow he stretched forth his long boat-hook and gently but firmly pulling us to shore again, declared that he could not forego our contribution. The *signore*, he croaked, could have no wish to defraud a poor man of his just due, and such was his destitution that that *soldo* was important to him. We of course succumbed, internally delighted, and Giovanni looked on

grinning his enjoyment. As soon as we were well out of hearing Giovanni informed us that this particular crab, far from being an object of charity, was a person of property, a capitalist in fact, with funds to the amount of no less than eight thousand *lire* well invested. Upon this our admiration, if shifted, was not lessened, for how could we help applauding the energy that burned in this venerable, but active old person, still undismayed by age or disability in the race for wealth?

TORCELLO.

"Short sail from Venice sad Torcello lies,
Deserted island, low and still and green.
Before fair Venice was a bride and queen
Torcello's court was held in fairer guise
Than Doges knew. To-day death-vapors rise
From fields where once her palaces were seen
And in her silent towers that crumbling lean
Unterrified the brooding swallow flies."
—H. H. *Torcello.*

The trip to Torcello, the cradle of Venice, is long enough to devote an afternoon to, and Giovanni according to arrangements made beforehand, appeared accompanied by an assistant made necessary by the distance to be rowed. The low-lying island that was the first refuge of those ruined and terror-stricken fugitives who stayed their flying feet where only seabirds had before taken shelter is some seven miles nearer the mainland than the city whose greatness they founded. The day was as though made for this especial pilgrimage—not cloudless, for that would have been less perfect, but full of magical mirage effects that made fairyland of the scattered islets and channels. To cross the *laguna morta*, as it is called, is not so simple a matter as it at first appears, for below the fair expanse of blue which seems to cover un-

known depths the sandy bottom often lies too close to the surface to allow passage for even the flat-bottomed gondolas. It is for this that certain old piles in groups or wandering singly and apparently aimlessly off into the perspective raise their noses above the ripples. They show the highways across the watery waste and with a knowledge of times and tides give help to the boatmen.

Upon these highways of an afternoon one has delightful encounters with fruit-boats. Nothing in fairyland can be as picturesque to the eye as craft like these—no such pomp of color can flaunt itself elsewhere. Upreared against the melting tones of sky and water is the sail, of gold or rich Pompeian red, or oftener a combination of tints. Piled up below lie great heaps of yellow and green-bronze squashes, well-favored melons, white and purple grapes; but prettiest of all are the peaches, which are brought in in round open baskets, within which they are packed to form a perfect pyramid running up to as sharp a point as may be formed by a single peach. To do this they are bound here and there with interlaced cords of twisted grass, slender enough to be unnoticeable. There they lie, their fervid glowing cheeks pressed close together and forming little mountain peaks of ambrosial sweetness and mellowness.

On we journeyed, past the square uncompromising walls of the damp cemetery that yields but an uneasy rest for its dead, who hold short leases in their overpopulated dwelling-place, cutting through the island of Murano by way of its main canal, and skimming the shore of Burano where the fisher-folk are so noted for their beauty. Ever as we advanced the tall *campanile* of the ancient church of Torcello, which first showed itself to us as a pillar of cloud on the horizon, turned slowly to substantial stone and united itself more firmly to the earth. Its low foundation is barely above water level

and with the little hamlet, a mere handful of scattered houses, has to be dyked about to keep the high tides out. It lies at this season in a very nest of sweet-smelling hay, hedged in with grape-vines, and the hay being just now mowed and raked into cocks, fragrant incense rises up about you as you thread your way through winding waterways to the landing.

Touching and beautiful the old church ever remains, and the fragments of carved marble that one may still study in its cool moist interior never lose their charm. In the end my affections always centre themselves upon a certain peacock who, with his traditional vanity subdued in these sacred precincts to a sober self-conscious stiffness, elongates his neck somewhat painfully in order conscientiously to fill a space. I regret to say that I know of no such tormenting young beggars as the children of Torcello, who do all that lies within them to destroy the happiness of any visitor to their island. Their persistent assaults and pertinacious clinging are proof against all discouragement or even threatening. To be rid of them for a time we walked some distance away from the village, following the canal till we came out upon the margin of the island, and here we sat for a while enjoying the stillness and the washing of the limpid water against the weedy shore.

A miniature wharf large enough for a skiff to touch at ended the narrow footpath here, and across the water from Burano a boat was approaching in which sat three young girls in holiday gowns, rowed by a middle-aged boatman. When they had reached the landing they skipped out of the boat and then handed their fare to the rower, who in surprise remonstrated with them for underpaying him. Their guilty giggles and frivolous rejoinders showed conclusively that they had cheated the poor fellow, and his patience when the temptation to

wrath was great quite touched us. In the end he could get nothing more out of them and they hurried away laughing, leaving him gazing ruefully at the copper in his hand and mopping his wet forehead.

"That is not quite fair," said I, from the other side of the landing.

"It is little indeed, Signora, this hot day," said he, shaking his head.

"You must have a little more to take home with you," said I, dropping something additional into his palm. The kindly fellow's face brightened with surprise and gratification, and his acknowledgments magnified a small donation into the largess one is sure to wish in such circumstances one had made it. He light-heartedly clambered into his boat again and, waving us a friendly farewell, rowed away to the opposite island.

The naughty children of Torcello defeated their own ends by driving us to sup elsewhere than upon their shores and thus lost the remains of our feast which they might otherwise have enjoyed. Floating away we sought a solitary little islet of the lagoon where certain sombre pines and cypresses cut a dark silhouette against the sky, and entering the bit of canal that runs into the land, stepped off upon broad stone steps and walked across the silent greensward to the low cloister and chapel of Saint Francis of the Desert. Over the door was written,—

"O beata solitudo,
O sola beatitudo."

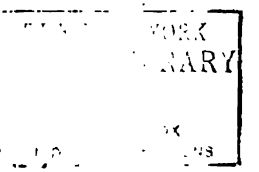
Let no one nursing a grief, unless indeed it has reached the stage of gentle melancholy, repair to this shrine of exile from the world, for there is that about its loneliness that constricts the heart, that quickens the sting of regret, that makes poignant the sorrow that was beginning to slumber.

A gentle brown-gowned brother came to show us what was permitted of his retreat and appeared a sort of incarnation of the spirit of the place, pallid, pensive, with eyes whose abstracted gaze seemed to have rested always upon the solemn reaches of the lagoons. But he was courteous and hospitable to us in so far as he might be to creatures so alien, though he would not allow us to leave any offering behind, not even when we urged it upon him for his monastery. He readily consented to our taking tea upon the shore of the island, however, and with a vague, indulgent smile and a patient inclination of the head, quietly closed the gate behind us.

A sense of forlornness somehow fell upon us, a feeling of pity and commiseration that no doubt he knew no need of, and after a while remembering this, we brushed it away and a little more soberly than usual began to spread out our feast upon the great blocks of stone that strengthened the low edge of the land and formed a convenient table. Here with our backs turned upon asceticism, conviviality almost returned to us, though to laugh aloud would have seemed too rude a disturbance of the solitariness of the spot. Indeed in the end there was a shadow upon our gayety that would not quite lift. *Festinat suprema*, as our Franciscan brother might have said; the last hour was upon us. On the morrow we must take our leave of Venice and the ache of this thought would make itself felt.

We rose slowly and stood awhile letting our eyes wander to the far level horizon. On every side was stillness and peace. The water whispered intermittently as it rippled against the low shore and immeasurable calm folded its wings above us. All the fever and pettiness of every-day life withdrew into infinite remoteness. Selfish strivings, ignoble aims shrank away. Here with Saint Francis was the true repose, here the surrender

Torcello. Bridge and Campanile.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that should bring unbroken rest. Must we leave it and return to earth?

In the gathering darkness we entered the gondola again, passing back through strange channels and skirting other islands where mysterious hedges or forbidding walls shut out all view of what was within. Now and then there were furtive little landing-places leading to closed doors or impenetrable gates, and illusive odors stole out to us, but never a sound wandered forth to break the silent enchantment in which all lay bound. It was as though secrets great with meaning trembled on the waves of ether that lapped us about but yet held them inviolate. The rock of the gondola softly gliding past became rhythmic and the supreme beauty of the star-strewn sky above held speech in check. At last we slipped through an opening in the straight line of stone that Venice presents to the *laguna morta* and began to make our ghostly way through some of the dark and vacant back canals.

Presently, with one of those abrupt contrasts ever lying in wait for one in Venice, we suddenly came out upon a scene of merry-making. It was the saint's day of the quarter, and all the world had come together to celebrate it. In the radiance of little red lanterns which brought everything into brilliant relief it was a joyous occasion indeed. The canal along the *fondamenta* was a bower of temporary arches hung with twinkling lights, banners were festooned from the windows, little booths had been erected below in the small piazza, and a buzzing murmuring crowd moved to and fro everywhere. Steam rose from large kettles in which bubbled and sizzled those mysterious frying morsels so dear to the palate of Italians, for although their gayety is singularly free from any grossness in the way of eating and drinking, no such meeting seems to be complete without the

odor of boiling fat. Jollity was everywhere but no rudeness, not a trace of boisterousness or vulgarity.

We disembarked to mingle with the good-natured crowd who treated us as quite of themselves. In the booths there was little to tempt a purchaser and indeed they appeared to be more a customary and ornamental adjunct to the celebration than the occasion of much traffic, if one might judge by the sales made. But what of that? The merchants were there to enjoy themselves like the rest of the world, not to worry over the uncertainties of commerce. Content sat upon the countenances of all. Nowhere is the duty of happiness better observed than in Venice. Beautiful, friendly, enthralling spot, who would ever willingly leave it! Surely not we and when at last we turned from the joyous company we carried away in our hearts the refrain of the song whose strains followed us:—

"O Venezia benedetta! non ti voglio più lasciar."

SPERIAMO

INDEX

Accoramboni, 216
Agrippina, 135
Anagni, 141
Ancona, 91
Anglo-American Hotel, Florence, 37
Arezzo, 79
Ariosto, 34
Ascoli, 104
Assisi, 190
Asso, Castel d', 156
Avezzano, 126

Baglioni, 198
Ballet in Florence, 50
Barbarossa at Milan, 10
Bellini, 224
Benedict, Saint, 164
Benvenuto di Giovanni, 269
Bergamo, 13
Bologna, 267
Bonfigli, 203
Boniface VIII, 144, 237
Borgo San Sepolcro, 83
Bracciano, 147
Brescia, 19
Bruno, Giordano, 90
Bucellato, 277
Buonacolsi, 29
Byron, Hotel, Ravenna, 233

Carlo Albertus, 62
Casinum, 163
Cassino, 162
Cavalca's Lives of Holy Fathers, 119
Celano, 126
Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani, 158
Chigi Garden, 70
Chiusuri, 67
Claudius, Emperor, 130
Colleone, 17
Coperte bought, 167
Cortona, 77
Crivelli, 92, 102

Dante, 259; Tomb of, 233
Dennistoun's Dukes of Urbino, 226
Dies Iræ, 127
Dog, Stellina, 44
Dwarfs, 28

"Earthwork out of Tuscany," 273
Easter in Florence, 57
Emidio, Saint, 109

Emissarius, Roman, 127
Este, Eleanora d', 32
Etruscan Tombs, 157, 203
Eugubine Tables, 213

Faenza, 238
Ferrara, 30
Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, 203
Forli, 239
Frederick II, 163
Fritto Misto, 107
Fucino, Lake, 127

Galiana Baracozzi, 154
Galla Placidia, 236
Gardens, Italian, 70, 158, 172
Golden Urn, 9, 247
Gondolier's Home, 286
Gonzaga, Elizabetta, 222
Gonzagas, The, 28
Good Friday, 63
Gran Sasso d'Italia, 120
Grassina, Procession, 59
Gregory XI, 163
Gubbio, 211
Guidarello Guidarelli, 237

Helena, Empress, 93
Holy Thursday, 57
Howells, W. D., 274

Ilaria, Tomb of, 273

Jesi, 89

Kid, *capretto arrosto*, 215

Lante, Villa, 158
Leader, Mr., Castle of, 54
Leopardi, Home of, 97
Loreto, 92
Lottery in Florence, 47
Lucca, 271

Macerata, 99
Mæcenas, 82
Malatesta, 228
Malpaga, 18
Manners of Lower Classes, 6
Mantua, 27
Mark Antony, 163
Mars, Worship of, 108
Matilda, Countess, 152
Medici, Lorenzo dei, 166
Medici Villa, 51
Milan Cathedral, 4
Minori, 180
Monte Oliveto, 66
Montepulciano, 74
Moretto Madonna, 26

Narcissus, 131
Narni, 184
Nelli, Ottaviano, 215
Neroccio dei Landi, 247
Nightingales, 186, 223

Opera in Florence, 49
Orsini, 148

Paitone, 23
Palio at Siena, 242, 249
Pallone, ball game, 222

Palmezzano Madonna, 240
Panetone, 292
Peasant Agriculture, 53
Pergolese, 90
Perugia, 197
Pesaro, 224
Piccolomini, 245
Pienza, 72
Piero da Morrone, 119
Piero della Francesca, 84
Pietro Aretino, 82
Pilato, Lake, 109
Pisa, 272
Pius II, 73
Poggio Castello, 54
Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, 6
Poliziano, 75

Ravello, 171
Ravenna, 233
Recanati, 95
Riario Family, 240
Roofs of Italy, 86
Ross, Janet, quoted, 53
Rugierotto, 126
Ruskin, 48; Gondolier of, 282

San Benedetto del Tronto, 111
Sangallo, 77
San Gimignano, 257
San Leo, 226
San Marino, 231
San Quirico, 69
Santa Croce, Florence, 48
Sassetta, 269
Scanno, 121
Sforza, 12; Laterina, 239
Siena, 242, 264
Signorelli, 66, 269
Sodoma, 66
Solmona, 116
Sordello, 29
Symonds, Miss, 186, 204

Te, Palezza del, 30
Theodoric, 235
Torcello, 300
Torlonia, Prince, 127
Tower of Bertha, 85
Tower, Tea on a, 275
Trasimeno, Lake, 204
Trevignano, 151
"Tuscan Cities," 274

Ubaldo, Bishop, 214
Ummidia Quadratilla, 163
Urbino, 218

Vasari, 82
Venice, 279
Villas for Sale, 52
Vincigliata, 54
Virgin, The House of, 93
Visconti of Milan, 10
Viterbo, 152
Vittoria Accoramboni, 217
Volterra, 264

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